1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

173 is limited by the fact that the Ngoni themselves were without writing, and their warlike disposition discouraged the visits of travellers who might otherwise have left some record of Ngoni life during those times. There is a considerable body of oral tradition [114] which has been reduced to writing since 1891, but for the most part these traditional tales assume a knowlege of Ngoni life and do not explicitly describe it. Our evidence for the main features of Ngoni society during this period of migration is found in three places. First we have the pattern of relationships prevailing at the present time between groups of Ngoni, between villages, chiefdoms and kingdoms. The legends which form the charter of these relations form a coherent and largely consistent corpus of traditional knowledge about events taking place within the last hundred and fifty years from which we can make reliable inferences about the internal history of the Ngoni. In particular we can gain significant information about the manner in which different groups were formed by elucidating the names applied to them. A modified form of genealogical inquiry, applied not to physiological ancestry but to links between dependant and lord and between satellite and parent villages, provides us with a reasonably trustworthy history of inter-group relations.

Secondly, there is the evidence available from the numerous [114] published accounts of Ngoni life which have been written by European and African authors. The traditions they record can be used to supplement the data gained from an analysis of present-day legends. A little information can be gleaned from the traditional histories of tribes attacked by the Ngoni.

Thirdly, we have a certain amount of comparative evidence 171 from other societies. There are about a dozen distinct Ngoni 184 kingdoms in different parts of Africa at the present time. In this 173 book we are concerned directly with only one of these groups, now situated near Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia. Much light is, however, thrown on its history by accounts of other Ngoni States, particularly of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, where the old form of society persisted longer than at Fort Jameson and where even now the changes brought about by colonial rule seem not to be so great. Accounts of Ngoni groups farther afield, and of the allied societies of the Swazi and Zulu in South Africa provide less direct evidence.

114 A few isolated events in early Ngoni history can be dated 1737 precisely. Captain Cutfield, R.N., met a group of Ngoni on 7 November 1822 and some Ngoni warriors skirmished with the

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Mpezeni

The tenure of a chief is very secure. Unless the chief is found guilty of some crime serious in the eyes of the Administration or unless there is serious disaffection in his county which gains Administrative support, a chief remains a chief for life. For the last fifty years the Administration has complained that Ngoni chiefs are inefficient and unco-operative, yet the number of instances in which a chief has been deposed is very small. I could discover only one clear instance. This security is not enjoyed by other Native Authority employees. Clerks who are found to have embezzled public money lose their posts even as they are punished in the Administration's courts, but the impetus to remove the occupant of a post comes usually from the Ngoni themselves and not from the Administration. Assessors and others who offend their chief are usually dismissed, while at a county meeting men may raise complaints against the actions of an office holder which, if sufficiently sustained, may result in the chief's dismissing him.

The secure tenure of the chiefs derives in part from the acceptance by the Administration that their posts are hereditary. It is interesting to note that some holders of less important and more recently created posts are saying that their sons should succeed them.

Table VIII (p. 152) shows clearly the kinds of activities that come within the control of the Native Authority. It does not show the whole range of social services which affect the Ngoni, for education is largely paid for by the Central Government and largely administered by the missions, while the Administration itself handles a wide variety of services, such as agricultural instruction, control of labour, maintenance of main roads, postal services, and very many more. The Administration endeavours to supervise contracts between Africans and non-Africans, and retains for its own courts the right to deal with disputes between Africans and non-Africans. Ngoni participate with other tribes as political groups only within the framework of institutions supervised by the Administration, such as the African Provincial Council of the Eastern Province. The Ngoni Native Authority is in fact, like any other Native Authority, a local government body to which certain functions have been delegated completely by the Central Government, and which for other functions relies partly or wholly on skilled or specialised services provided for it by the centre. The Paramount Chief is hereditary chairman of a rural district council, representing the interests of his peasants to the central authority and representing it to them.

However this analogy of local government is only partly correct, for the society in which Ngoni now live is not a homo-

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Mpezeni

184 geneous or wholly integrated one. It is a plural society, in which
648 as yet the Administration represents the interests, albeit the enlightened interests, of one caste and the Ngoni belong to another. Ngoni share an interest in tobacco booms with their White and Indian neighbours, and they share an interest in the colour bar with distant tribes, but the field of common interest of Northern Rhodesia, or any other major geographical unit, as a multi-racial whole is still small. Ngoni society has not as yet become as wholly integrated into the larger society as have say, the rural districts of Britain, because the well-integrated larger society does not yet exist. Meanwhile the Ngoni still retain a considerable identity of their own, and the chiefs and the Native Authority provide the nucleus for that identity. As such, the posts of chief and to a lesser extent of
[645] councillor have more than mere administrative significance. Native
[602] Authority officials are still bound by ties of kinship to their people and are still the living embodiment of sentiments of group loyalty and unity. They may have a variety of roles to play which are recognized as distinct, but they still have little private life, in which what they do is of no public concern. In matters of religion
[771] Ngoni identify themselves with their co-religionists, dead or living, in other parts of the world, rather than with their pagan forebears. But in political matters Ngoni still identify themselves with Zwangendaba and Shaka and their successors rather than with the British Administration and the Queen of England. They claim the battle of Jericho as one of their victories, but not yet Trafalgar.

There has always been a clear division between the African
202 full-time employees of the Administration and the chiefs. A formal
648 distinction was made as early as 1904 between the Boma messengers, later known as district messengers, attached to the Native Commissioner's office, and the chiefs and district headmen who lived in their own villages. There were also at that time district messengers, later called divisional headmen, who lived in their own villages but received a few shillings a year as stipend and acted as policemen and messengers for the Administration.

Nowadays the Administration employs Africans in a variety
647 of posts, the most important being those of messenger and clerk.
624 The messengers are mainly stationed in Fort Jameson and Fort
648 Manning and visit the rural areas on specific errands or accompanying a District Officer on tour. From time to time messengers are sent to live at compounds scattered through the countryside, where they remain for a few months at a time and act as rural
[693] constables, enforcing laws relating to such activities as cultivation

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

these Ngoni before they were defeated and driven out of Songea by the Gama group of Ngoni.

The northern Ngoni, who travelled east of the Luangwa valley into Tanganyika, acquired followers with clan descent names from the Nsenga in Northern Rhodesia and the Safwa and Sukuma in Tanganyika.

(*d*) '*Those from this country*'

Under this category were included all the local peoples in Nyasaland who either were conquered by the Ngoni or surrendered to them, and who were brought within the rule of the Ngoni kingdoms. These in the northern kingdom were chiefly of Tumbuka and Henga clans, with others from Cewa and Bemba stock. In the central kingdom the local clan names were of Cewa and Yao origin.

Two conclusions emerge from this review of the ethnic composition of the Ngoni kingdoms. The first is that the use of Ngoni as a tribal designation causes confusion. In this study the term Ngoni will be used when referring to persons whose clan descent names show that their ancestors were of Swazi or trans-Zambesi stock—that is categories (*a*) and (*b*) in this chapter. This criterion of who were Ngoni would probably not correspond with the criteria used in the 1945 census enumeration. The enumerators may have asked a direct question, 'Are you Ngoni?'; they may have asked the person's clan descent name; they may have asked to which kingdom or chiefdom he belonged; or they may have asked all four questions or any two. Since the Ngoni were found in every district in the country it was likely that there was little uniformity in the form of the questions asked by the enumerators or in the criteria admitted by those being questioned for declaring themselves to be Ngoni.

The second conclusion is that even if the criterion is accepted that the Ngoni were those whose ancestors crossed the Zambesi, the Ngoni kingdoms as political states included all the four elements (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*). The status of the ethnically distinct groups in the kingdoms varied according to their clan names which indicated whether they came from the south or had been incorporated at a later stage. Ngoni forms of culture were found not only in groups (*a*) and (*b*), as would be expected, but often among families in group (*c*) who, through fighting in the Ngoni armies and marrying into Ngoni families, had adopted their social and ritual pattern.[1]

[1] Since the first draft of this book was written, Dr. Barnes's study of the Fort Jameson Ngoni, *Politics in a Changing Society* (O.U.P., 1954), has appeared. The early history of the Ngoni in the northern kingdom is the same as that of the Fort Jameson Ngoni, up to the final separation of the kingdoms under Mpeseni and Mbelwa. Dr. Barnes's excellent bibliography gives the sources for the historical documentation of their travels. A brief sketch of the history of the two groups under the leadership of the Jere and Maseko Paramounts is given in Mary Tew's *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*.

CHAPTER III

NGONI CULTURE

AMONG the mixed ethnic elements in the Ngoni kingdoms the ruling aristocracy were those whose ancestors were of Swazi and trans-Zambesi origin, and whose clan descent names established them as belonging to the true Ngoni group. The families with these clan names formed also a social aristocracy in the villages where they lived, in the areas of the chiefs and *alumuzana*, and in the Ngoni kingdoms. This social status, established primarily by the clan name, was visible in the position of the huts in the village, arranged at the head of the kraal; in the leading role played by the senior members of these families on all ceremonial occasions; and in the practice of a number of customs which were defined as Ngoni. Ngoni culture, as seen in social and ritual life, was a series of interwoven patterns of social organization and social behaviour. We shall outline these patterns here in order to bring together many of the forms and practices described in the rest of the book. In a more homogeneous society it would have been possible to find in these patterns a consistent and clearly defined culture. Yet one of the main problems in studying Ngoni culture in the 1930's was that there were many variations of each pattern and the anthropologist was all the time trying to find out what degree of cultural conformity existed among the Ngoni aristocracy. Of the different aspects of culture reviewed in this chapter, the ritual pattern was the one most consistently followed, and it was the one in which the Ngoni social aristocracy most clearly demonstrated that they had a distinctive common culture which was found in both kingdoms and in the secession states.

(*a*) *Kinship pattern*

Like the South-eastern Bantu from whom they came the Ngoni were patrilineal in descent and inheritance. Marriage was negotiated by go-betweens and concluded through the handing over of cattle, and the term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this form of marriage. An Ngoni woman married by this form was known as *mlobokazi*. A strict interpretation in the courts was given to this form of marriage as it affected the ownership and custody of the children. The children of a *lobola* marriage contract belonged to their father and could be claimed by him if the marriage broke up, or on the death of their mother. Traditionally, virilocal residence was an Ngoni custom, and it was supported by the house system whereby the male members of each house formed a group with economic interests in common through the joint ownership of the cattle in the name of the house. A widespread variant

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

The distinctiveness of Ngoni institutions, so often emphasized by the older men and by the early travellers in Nyasaland, was due to cultural affinities with the South-eastern Bantu. The attached table sets out those social and cultural elements in the Ngoni kingdoms which were most distinct from parallel features among the neighbouring peoples, and which had obvious affinity with South-eastern Bantu cultures. The main Ngoni cultural elements have already been referred to in this chapter and will be further discussed in the rest of this study. The corresponding elements among the local peoples are based partly on the earlier sources quoted by Tew and partly on local informants and my own observations. In collecting information about clans, the *mbumba* group consisting of a man with his sisters' children, and the girls' initiation schools, I had no direct contacts with any except Cewa sources.

Variations in cultural conformity among the Ngoni

In the Ngoni kingdoms among families with Swazi and trans-Zambesi clan descent names there was considerable variation in the degree to which they maintained Ngoni institutions and practised Ngoni cultural forms. The anthropologist was constantly aware that the time element was an important factor in the consolidation of Ngoni practices and in the attitudes developed towards Ngoni culture among the individuals in the different generations. The Ngoni in both kingdoms spoke of the 'older generations' (*mibadwo wa kale*), 'the middle generations' (*mibadwo wa mphati*), and 'the present generation' (*mibadwo wa tsopano*). The first had grown to adulthood before the Europeans came, and were the older senior men and women in the 1930's; the second had been affected by European missionaries, traders, and officials while they were young men and women; the third had never known anything but European contacts and many had grown up in European schools. The senior Ngoni of the older generation often expressed the sentiment: *zatha zonse tsopano* (everything is finished now). They included in that saying the regrets of the older Ngoni for their former independence, and their resentment at the domination of European rule and European culture. It is idle to speculate what cultural changes might have taken place in the Ngoni kingdoms if European influence had been postponed another twenty to thirty years. Nevertheless it is a vital factor in assessing Ngoni culture that the kingdoms had barely twenty years of independent existence before the Europeans began to penetrate Nyasaland. The older Ngoni looked back on their former independent existence as a golden age in which they were spreading Ngoni customs and culture as well as exercising political supremacy. It is difficult to believe that this was wholly true, in view of the extensive cultural interchange going on in the country as a whole. It is, however, possible that wider acceptance of Ngoni cultural elements was prevented by the advent of the Europeans, in so far as cultural institutions and political dominance were closely

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associated. When warfare ceased the Ngoni could no longer force subject peoples to accept their rule and their cultural institutions, and they had to acquiesce in considerable cultural heterogeneity within their kingdoms, which, according to Ngoni informants, would not have been allowed in pre-European days. The illustrations they gave were in terms of the families living 'on the horns of the village', in many cases the families of captives taken in war. Formerly, they said, those families would have been made to marry with *lobola*, to have their ears pierced in Ngoni fashion, to serve in the army, to be associated with one of the house-groups and serve them in the huts or in the gardens. When Ngoni political power declined, and when large villages broke up, some of these groups formed their own villages and reverted to their former practices of matrilineal descent and uxorilocal residence, and of girls' initiation ceremonies.

In the northern kingdom one section of the peoples under Henga leadership had adopted a patrilineal system before the Ngoni came. The effect of the Ngoni conquest was to strengthen these practices in this northern section, adding marriage by *lobola*, and to extend them to the southern Tumbuka whose kinship and marriage practices were like those of the Cewa who were their neighbours.[1] In the central kingdom, patrilineal descent, marriage by *lobola* and virilocal residence were only practised by families of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and they had introduced variations in virilocal residence which will be discussed in Chapter IV, Part III. Within the true Ngoni families in both kingdoms the senior men and women in the 1930's were aware that cultural conformity with Ngoni practices was not as strict as it had been in their parents' days. They spoke of those Ngoni families who were non-conforming as 'people who spoil the land'.

On the other hand, the adoption of Ngoni customs by non-Ngoni in the Ngoni kingdoms, that is by families with descent names from cis-Zambesi and local clans, continued to take place after European rule began. I found several instances of this adoption in the central kingdom, and many of them were related to the acquisition of cattle by former non-Ngoni families. It was chiefly the virilocal form of residence and patrilineal descent which were taken over with *lobola* marriage. When describing the adoption of such Ngoni practices, informants always said it was *monga cingoni* (like the Ngoni). Those who belonged to the Ngoni kingdoms and had largely adopted Ngoni culture expressed strong sentiments of attachment to it; this was particularly true of town-dwellers who had come from the Ngoni kingdoms but were not members of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans. Though they adopted many external forms of European culture in dress, houses and food, the consciousness of their association with Ngoni culture and the Ngoni kingdoms was expressed in strongly emotional terms.

[1] Tew, M. op. cit. pp. 107, 109.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

the south end of the lake in 1891, he pleaded with him not to use force against the northern Ngoni. 'Don't fight them,' he urged, 'enlist them.' The military commander, Captain Macguire, who was present at the interview, showed interest in the idea of a new recruiting ground for the regular forces in Nyasaland, but his ideas were not pursued as it proved to be easier to continue recruiting the Yao and Tonga who had already shown themselves good military material.

In the central kingdom the first reactions of the Administration towards the Ngoni were favourable. Paramount Cikusi was visited by administrators in 1882 and 1886, and in 1890 concluded a treaty placing himself under British protection. On his death in 1891 his successor Gomani I sent messengers to inform the Administration of his father's death, to declare his allegiance to the British, and to present a bull and a cow, four tusks of ivory and twenty-five men to help in the war against the slave-raiders. In the following year 100 Ngoni warriors were drafted into the regular forces and Mr. H. H. Johnston reported: 'The Ngoni are altogether a splendid people and may be regarded as the backbone of British Central Africa.'[1] But this co-operative relationship did not last. In 1896 it was reported that 'Gomani and a number of his turbulent young headmen were opposed to our influence.'[2] Ngoni armies raided a mission station, an expeditionary force under British officers was sent, the Paramount's village was attacked and his army defeated. He was taken prisoner and, refusing to walk to Zomba, was shot near Dombole in his former kingdom.

In the 1930's the Ngoni of the central kingdom referred repeatedly to the expedition sent against them, the defeat of their army, the death of their Paramount and the seizure of some of their cattle. They nursed a grudge against their conqueror which coloured much of their sentiments towards Europeans. They sometimes referred to the long period of contact of the northern Ngoni kingdom with the Livingstonia Mission, and contrasted it with their contacts with several missions who appeared to them to be in league with the Administration against them and not to take their side in relations with the Government as Dr. Laws had done in the north.

When Cibambo visited the central Ngoni kingdom with me in 1936 he was interested in making comparisons with his own Ngoni of the north. He found that in central Ngoniland there were very few men who knew Ngoni songs well, and that in general the knowledge of the Ngoni language had almost died out. The big shields were not, he thought, as well cut as those in the north. Yet the war-dances were performed correctly, and the war-dress which the dancers wore was more striking than anything which had been preserved in the north.

[1] Johnston, H. H. *Report of the First Three Years' Administration of the Eastern Portion of B.C.A.* 1894, p. 24.
[2] Johnston, H. H. *Report on Trade and General Conditions in Nyasaland, 1896–7*, p. 7.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

571 643 function and authority was largely evolved and built up during the Ngoni migration across the Zambesi and the early settlement in Nyasaland.

643 The office of the Paramount was supported by three typical Ngoni institutions. The first was the regency exercised by the man who was held responsible for the care of the office of the Paramount. He was called 'the one who takes care of the country', 'the one who has to put the new *inkosi* in his place', 'the one who takes care of the young *inkosi* until he enters his father's place'. We shall see later how this principle of regency operated in particular cases in the succession to the Paramountcy. It proved to be an effective provision both in the case of a minor who was recognized as his father's heir, and during an interregnum while the succession was being discussed. The Ngoni showed a clear understanding of what functions the regent ought to perform, and when he exceeded these functions and usurped, or tried to usurp, the Paramount's position they condemned his action as wrong.

The second institution which supported the Paramountcy was the 'big house' from which the heir to the Paramount had to come. We shall see later that it was not always considered essential that the heir should be the actual child of the wife in the big house. A boy could be adopted [597] into the house and, by Ngoni kinship rules, he was then a child of that house and of the woman in it.

643 The third institution, which made the Paramount immortal at death 769 after having been supreme in his life-time, was the Ngoni practice of 'guarding his spirit' in a hut, usually in the village where he had lived. The guardianship of a spirit was not practised exclusively for the Paramount. All the chiefs and the heads of the Swazi clans had this provision made for their spirits when they died, but in national crises prayers [282] addressed to the spirits of former Paramounts were of supreme importance.

The royal clan and the big house

643 Among the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans which formed the Ngoni 614 aristocracy the royal clan had a unique position. Not only was it the clan 565 of the Paramount, but its members had social rank and prestige because they belonged to his clan. In the northern kingdom informants showed 184 awareness of the fact that their royal clan of Jere was not one of the well-known clans in the south. Other clan names found among them, such as Ngomezulu, Thole, Nzima, Nqumayo, and many more, were known to be clan names among the South-eastern Bantu. The following explanation was given by Cibambo about the name Jere and was the one most widely accepted:

> 'The Ngoni themselves say that the clan name of Jere was given during the journey, and that it arose out of the number of people who were with Zwangendaba. When the Ngoni want to speak of a large number of people they use two well-known words which are: '*Ngu Shaka*' (it is Shaka);

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

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'*Ngu Jere*' (it is Jere). Perhaps Zwangendaba and others took their clan name from this, seeing that they had become a great number. It is certain that the clan name of Jere is not known in Zululand or Swaziland.

In the northern kingdom all the chiefs recognised as Subordinate Native Authorities were of the royal clan, and hence its political authority was widespread. It was noticed by the early missionaries in northern Ngoniland that the sons of Zwangendaba who were chiefs under their brother, the Paramount, showed some degree of independence in that they wanted to rule their own areas with the minimum of centralized control. The pre-eminence of the Paramount among the other Jere rulers was strengthened as time went on by the remoter kinship relationship of the other Jere chiefs to the Paramount. After Zwangendaba's death they were his brothers of the same father and different mothers. Two generations later they were farther removed from his kinship circle since each of their posts was inherited on a direct father to son principle. The political and social importance of membership of the royal clan tended to go in the direct line of relationship to the Paramount rather than to the collateral branches. Later, in Part III, we shall examine the social prestige of the *amakosana* (lit. children of the *inkosi*). It was the closeness of their relationship to the reigning Paramount which was the basis for their social prestige, though evidence showed that a sister or brother or child from a big house of a former Paramount was also given social recognition as an important personage.

The royal clan of Maseko in the central kingdom was also known in Swaziland. Dr. Kuper refers to it in connexion with the Swazi custom of cremating the body of the Maseko chief at his death on a rock by a river.[1] This custom was brought from the south by the Ngoni under Maseko leadership and carried out for each successive Paramount up to 1891. Among these Ngoni the royal clan had special relationships with other leading clans, but the Paramount did not share his political authority with any others of his clan. His chiefs were all of other clans, and Ngoni informants said that it was a deliberate act of the Paramount Mputa to exclude his brothers from political authority and from disputing with him the control of the kingdom. In the isolated position thus established for the royal clan, two other clans had a ritual relationship with the Paramount. One was the Phungwako clan which was custodian of the Paramount's 'medicines', known as the *tonga*. The other was the Ngono clan which provided the companion for the Paramount whom I have called the 'royal shadow' (see below, pp. 61–3). Yet another special relationship with the royal clan was that of the Nzunga clan which had *ubale*, or brotherly relations, with the Maseko clan, that involved sharing the same avoidances and excluded inter-marriage.

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The relationship of the Paramount to other leaders of the royal clan

[1] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*, p. 86.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

643 614 565 184 was thus different in the two kingdoms. In the north he was one ruler, though a supreme one, among several ruling kinsmen of the same clan. His position in the past had been strengthened by the prestige shared by his clansmen, but also challenged by his near kinsmen in positions of authority. In the central kingdom the Paramount shared no authority with his fellow clansmen. He was unique among them as a ruler, while sharing special ritual relationships with the two other clans which supported his position without challenging it.

643 614 585 A new Paramount, in order to be installed in his father's place, had to be of the big house as well as of the royal clan. Dr. Kuper described the Swazi practice whereby cattle were contributed by the nation for the mother of the king, so that she was called the 'mother of the people of the country'. She also described the ritual marriage of the first wife of a ruler, who was called *sisulamsiti*, and who was never the mother of the heir.[1] The Ngoni Paramount-elect in the northern kingdom married his first wife when he was a young man and she was called *msulamsizi*, 'the one who takes the darkness off him'. The big wife, who would bear the heir, was married with a large gift of cattle taken from the herd of the big wife of the reigning Paramount and, after marriage, was attached to her big house. We shall discuss in greater detail in the next chapter the relationships of the royal women to the Paramount and to each other. Here it is important to note that the big house owned by the big wife was the place where the future chief was brought up. In the central kingdom the first marriage of the Paramount was traditionally with a woman of the Magagula clan who was said not to bear children. She held an honoured place in the social hierarchy and was married with cattle taken from the herd of the *gogo* house of the reigning Paramount. It was regarded as a ritual marriage, for if she did bear children they were not acknowledged. [842 847] Informants were uncertain whether methods to prevent conception were used, or whether abortion was practised, or whether children, if born, died young or were disposed of or placed out in other households. The last alternatives were unlikely, and one of the first two expedients was in line with the phrase always used of this wife: 'she did not bear children'. The wife who bore the heir was married next and was always of another leading clan, and the cattle for her came from the herd of the big house of the reigning Paramount.

643 614 The reasons were obvious why the remembered genealogies of the Ngoni Paramounts of the royal clans were short compared with the genealogies of some other African royal houses. The remote ancestors of Jere chiefs and Maseko chiefs, who were, as we have seen, not Paramounts before they left the south, were forgotten once the departure had taken place. Only a few names had been handed down and were repeated by the official praisers, whose task it was to call out the names of the direct ancestors of the Paramount before declaiming his *izibongo* or

[1] Kuper, H. op. cit. pp. 54 & 91.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Manga. It was a time of great emotional tension and strain, and the absurdities of the jester relieved the solemnity and formality of the visit. This jester was said by informants to be a man of the Moyo clan, who owed his position not to hereditary right but to a ready and witty tongue.

The death of the Paramount

It is in the ceremonies at the death of the Paramount that we find some major differences between the traditional practices of the northern and central Ngoni peoples, which might be attributed to the separate groups in Natal from which they came. I was living in Mcakatha village in the central kingdom at the time of the sickness and death of Bambo Manga, the most important of the royal women among the central Ngoni. The ritual ceremonies at her funeral were said to be almost identical with those at the death of the Paramount, and I was able to check details of similarity and difference with old men who remembered the death of Cikusi, the last Ngoni Paramount in the central kingdom for whom the full ritual was carried out. I was not able after that to pursue further possible parallels and differences among the northern Ngoni. My general impression from informants was that among the northern Ngoni the ritual at the death of a Paramount differed from that of any other prominent man only in certain details of the period and form of mourning. Among the central Ngoni, as Rattray said in a note on the text which will be given, 'such funerals were more of a military pageant than anything else. All outward signs of grief were rigorously excluded.' I can confirm that from my observations at the death of Bambo Manga.

When the Paramount became ill, a diviner was called to give advice. He might advise that a sacrifice should be made to the ancestor spirits. He might suggest witchcraft as the cause of illness. He might advise calling in a man to give medicine to the Paramount. When, in spite of sacrifices and treatment, the Paramount died, the announcement was made from the edge of his village: *Izulu lidilikile*, 'the heaven has fallen down'. Messengers were sent to all the chiefs and to all the *alumuzana* and other leading men. From the edge of each central village the cry was made, and each chief and *mulumuzana* sent his messengers to make the same announcement in each of the villages under him.

Among the northern Ngoni the actual ceremony of burial does not appear to have been very different from that of any other important man, with one exception, that the Paramount, like other ruling Jere chiefs, was buried at the edge of the cattle kraal in a circular pit of the kind used when digging clay for mudding houses, on one side of which there was a niche where the corpse was placed in a sitting position, facing south-east. This burying in a circular grave on the edge of the kraal was the procedure which I witnessed at the burial of Bambo Manga among the central Ngoni (see below p. 75).

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FR5 Ngoni FR5

643 766 184 Dr. Steele, one of the early medical missionaries in northern Ngoni-land, was present at the burial of Mbelwa I and left an account of it which is quoted by Dr. Elmslie.[1] He spoke of the great crowds of men coming to mourn armed with spears and shields, and some with guns. They came in companies, as if they were the military bands coming for mobilization from the head villages. They marched first with their shields held high over their heads, and then laid them down and clasped their hands behind their heads, advancing towards and retreating from the grave and keeping up a continuous mourning cry of '*Baba be*'. Three days elapsed between the death and the burial. During that time two graves were dug, in order that all the Paramount's possessions might be buried with him or beside him. When the graves were ready, the kraal was cleared of all but the married men who had the head-ring. Meantime the wives of the Paramount, carrying his shields, were advancing towards the grave and retreating, a few steps at a time. They finally went back to their houses, dressed themselves in skins, and returned in single file on their hands and knees. They withdrew as the corpse was brought out and placed in the grave, and other women came with the Paramount's possessions, such as pipes, wooden head-rests and shields, and all were put into the graves. The men stood in circles round the graves with their shields over their heads.

Among the central Ngoni Rattray recorded an account of the funeral rites of Cikusi in 1891, which I was able to check with more than one old man who had been present. There was also the funeral of Bambo Manga which I witnessed in 1937, where the ritual followed was identical with that described by the old men for the Paramount Cikusi, with one exception: that her possessions but not her body were cremated by a stream.

The chief differences between the northern and central Ngoni in the funeral rites at the death of the Paramount were that the central Ngoni Paramounts of the Maseko clan were cremated and not buried, and there was no public mourning, but instead a series of war-dances. There [644] were two other distinctive features among the central Ngoni: formerly [786] the individual known as the 'royal shadow' died with the Paramount; and from the time of the actual death to the time of the cremation there was a period of licence and lawlessness called *ciponde*. This latter phenomenon may have existed among the northern Ngoni, but I did not ask about it specifically when I was there, and I did not hear it referred to. I was made aware of it forcibly at the death of Bambo Manga when my cook and houseboy immediately dumped all their possessions in my hut as the only safe place during the time of *ciponde*. Rattray's account of the death of Cikusi also mentioned this practice.

In the traditions of the central Ngoni it was recorded that only the Maseko Paramounts in the direct line were cremated, and not the

[1] Elmslie, W. A. op. cit. p. 270.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

brothers of the dead Paramount who acted as regents. Thus Ngwana was cremated in Ulosi before crossing the Zambesi, and Mputa was cremated in the river Lichiningo in Songea in Tanganyika. This was confirmed by an informant of the Gama clan who were for a time under the central Ngoni Paramount in Songea and later were allied with the northern Ngoni. He said 'We killed Mputa, the *inkosi*, when fighting, and his people burned him because it was their custom in burying to burn.'

An old woman who came from Portuguese territory to see me in the central kingdom said that when Zintambira I died the Portuguese made them bury him 'in a box'. The onlookers in Mcakatha at the time of my interview with the old woman said 'Yes, they were not allowed to burn him.'

The central Ngoni leaders referred often to the ritual significance of the cremation of their Paramount, followed by the washing of the ashes into the stream 'to strengthen the land'. On my first arrival in the central kingdom I was questioned closely by several of the big *izinduna* and *ahumuzana* about the practice of cremation in England. They alleged that, under the influence of the local mission, the Paramount Gomani II had said that he wished to be buried in a coffin with Christian burial rites. They were much concerned about this, because of the effect on the strength and status of his successor and on the country as a whole. 'If he is not burned his children will not be honoured and will only be as *ahumuzana*. Is it right that another tribe, the English, should come and change our customs?' Great relief was expressed when I told them that Christians were cremated in England with full Christian ritual, and also when I told them that the ashes of one of the early Scottish missionaries in northern Ngoniland had been brought back by his widow to lie there.

The following account of the funeral of Cikusi was given to Rattray:

¶ When the chief of the whole country dies, they do not immediately inform the people of his own village. First they send messengers to other villages, to tell them 'the clouds have fallen today'. They do this because they fear, 'if we tell his own men first, they may go and commence to forage and plunder, as is done at a chief's death'. Then all begin to assemble, all the war bands from the different villages, shields in hand. They are decked out in their feather head-dresses, and wristlets and anklets of goat's hair; (the bands) glitter as if it were all for show and not for a funeral. Then some of the old men dress the dead chief for burial. The knees are bent against the chest, and the arms bent, the hands are laid against the cheeks, and they take a small gourd-cup and make him grasp it in his hand. When they bathe him, they take grass from a forest glade. They do not wash the body, but only the face. The water they use they do not draw from the well where people drink, but take water from a running stream. The body is not anointed with oil. Then they take the spleen of an ox and deck his head until it all glitters, and then take the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

178 622 631 645

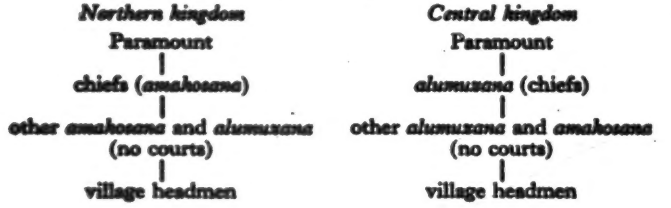
sons of his father and of his father's brothers. These *amakosana* were honoured next to the Paramount. The *alumuzana* were for justice in the courts, and for being the 'ears of the Paramount' in all the country. The change was made by Mputa because he saw that if the *amakosana* were given power they claimed to be big chiefs themselves. Therefore he chose for the courts and for the leaders in war and for lesser chiefs the *alumuzana* and *izinduna* who were clever and whom they could trust.

● 184 622 631 645 [698]

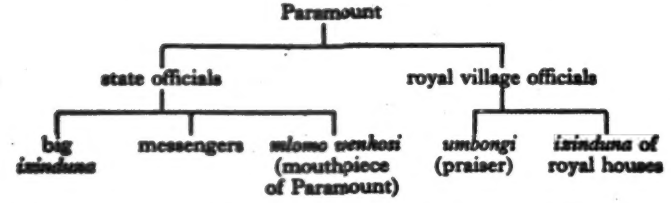
The diagram on p. 99 relates to the period between 1933 and 1939 and sets out first the officials in the territorial divisions of the Ngoni kingdoms from the Paramount to the headman of a village. In the northern kingdom only the Paramount and the six chiefs had recognized courts, the chiefs' courts operating for their districts and the Paramount's court for the whole kingdom. There were two sets of office-bearers who had no courts but who exercised authority over groups of villages. One group consisted of members of the Jere clan who were not recognized chiefs but were *amakosana*, literally 'children of the chief' but used as a rule for all members of the royal clan. Only certain *amakosana* had villages under them. The other group consisted of the heads of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans who owned several villages and sometimes had authority over a large area. Cibambo put this group below that of the chiefs, and other informants confirmed this as the pre-European pattern. But the informants also said that many of the powerful *alumuzana* formerly had their own courts and did not have to bring their cases to the chiefs' courts as they did in the 1930's. At the bottom of the territorial hierarchy came the headmen of single villages. In some cases the village headman had formerly been an *induna* in a large village which had broken up. Some were of the royal clan or of Swazi clans. The majority belonged to the local tribes and were owners of villages which were for the most part villages of one kinship group.

The text about the hierarchy in the central kingdom shows that a deliberate change had been made in the traditional pattern to avoid a struggle between the Paramount and his brothers when they had recognized positions as chiefs. The *alumuzana* who appear in the diagram as chiefs were the six who were recognized in 1933 as Subordinate Native Authorities. There were other *alumuzana* who were not so recognized, and certain members of the royal clan, all of whom owned a number of villages but had to take their cases to the recognized courts. The division caused by setting up the Portuguese boundary in the 1890's left many of the leaders of the Maseko clan on the Portuguese side, with the result that the number of *amakosana* owning villages and taking any prominent part in the life of the kingdom was very small; and another large group of the Maseko clan were in Dedza district under Chief Kacindamoto. The majority of village headmen in the central kingdom were of local tribes, and their villages were as a rule much larger than those in the northern kingdom.

Ngoni territorial office-bearers.



Ngoni national office-bearers (both kingdoms)



In the description of the annual gathering in the central kingdom to discuss new regulations, reference was made to those on 'the platform' at one end of the great square. There the Paramount sat with his state officials, the big *izinduna*, the messengers, and his spokesman or mouthpiece. These have been called state officials in the diagram to distinguish them from the officials of the royal village. It is a distinction which is one of convenience rather than of importance. The Paramount's spokesman lived in the royal village, and the praiser often did not. But the spokesman appeared with the Paramount on all occasions in every part of his kingdom when he went visiting, whereas the official praiser only recited the praise-songs at ceremonies in the royal village.

The big *izinduna*, as Cibambo points out in his text, were very close to the Paramount, advising him on matters of state, and speaking to the cases in his court. The *izinduna* of the big house and of other houses in the royal village were not concerned with matters of state, but with day-to-day affairs in the village. Illustrations of their work will be given in the next chapter. The work of the messengers, described by Cibambo, was that of keeping close touch between the royal village and the chiefs. He describes also how each territorial office-bearer had his messengers to send out to the heads of the next group below his. By this use of messengers for intercommunication between officials, the *alumuzana* and *amahosana* who had no courts received messengers from the chief above them and sent out their own messengers to the villages which they owned.

The only group mentioned by Cibambo which is not included in the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

621 593 break up into smaller villages, and there were on the whole more villages in the north said to be *wabanja limodzi* (of one family) than among the central Ngoni. On the other hand, the *hunnguhu* pattern of village division had almost disappeared among the central Ngoni.

591 592 [361] A man on his first marriage built a hut for his wife behind his mother's hut, where his brothers by the same mother or by mothers of the same house also built. The family grouping by residence was therefore determined by house affiliation. Associated with this residential group based on kinship, there were the residences of the *induna* and his family which had separate alignments on a kinship basis, though for certain common purposes they combined with the family groups related to the house by kinship. The children of the families belonging to the house and the children of the *induna* who took care of it began to intermarry when the prohibitions on marriage within the village ceased to operate. In this way kinship bonds were created within a group which formerly had only residence and certain activities in common, and this process was recognizable in a number of the larger villages, especially in the central kingdom.

593 Within the different types of family groups determined by their residential basis there were certain outstanding relationships between members of the same family. The most important of these was that between father and children; the father, as the biological parent and also the symbol of authority, was the focus of honour and respect, and the one who helped his children when they were in need. The relation between the father and his children among the Ngoni was always a balance between affection and care, and respect and authority. The ideal pattern of a father, as described by informants, included all these elements and also wisdom. This concept of the father relationship was extended to the head of a *banja*, to the headman of a village or a section of a village, to a *mulumuzana* in charge of an area, to a chief, and to the [576] Paramount himself. The Ngoni greeting to all older men, and the most respectful form of address to a man of any seniority, was *baba*, father, or its Nyanja equivalent *bambo*.

The mother, on the other hand, had a more limited relationship within the family circle. To her own children and to the children of her co-wives, especially of her house, she was the provider of food, and the affectionate 'cherisher'[1] of young children; but she was also treated with respect and, when she reached some seniority, she had considerable authority over her daughters and her younger co-wives. She could never compete, however, with the sisters of her husband or with his mothers, who expected to exercise authority over her children and to [591] arrange for the ceremonies connected with birth, puberty, and marriage. 184 In villages where virilocal residence was the rule, the husband's sisters were married elsewhere and were only present in the village during

[1] *Kulera*, lit. to cherish, is the word used for bringing up children.

visits or on special occasions. In the central kingdom, where an important man's sisters often married in the village and stayed there, it was evident that they often exercised authority over their brother's children.

In polygynous Ngoni families the relationship between siblings was marked by strong attachment. Among the boys in the *laweni* brothers united to protect their younger brothers from other boys, and in the families of Swazi clans brothers showed many signs of youthful intolerance and arrogance towards boys of other clans, especially in matters concerning cattle and their herding. Sibling rivalry among boys was to a large extent controlled by two factors. One was the *laweni* system where the age-set principle predominated. The other was the division into the big house and *gogo* house, where the children of the *gogo* house knew that they stood in a different relationship to succession and authority in the village from their brothers and sisters in the big house. Within the big house itself, sons of the big wife knew that succession was regulated by seniority, and that the eldest son would expect to get priority when he married and it was necessary to allot c[illegible] *lobola*. The brother-sister link between children of the same mother was, as we have seen, a very close one, especially with the older sister of a man who was heir to a high position. This sister in her relation to his children carried almost the same authority as he did. Among sisters of the same family there was less apparent cohesion, except among very high-ranking Swazi clans where the girl children were looked after by special nursemaids and had their instruction in correct behaviour together from the older woman known as their *gogo*.

Ngoni grandparents on the paternal side showed little of the joking relationship with their grandchildren sometimes associated with this tie. When children went to visit their maternal grandparents in another village there was noticeably more ease between them and more indulgence was shown. In their father's village children were always aware that his parents were persons of standing and authority. Girls over six or seven often slept in their paternal grandmother's hut if she was a widow, and were aware that, though she showed kindliness in providing for their needs, she was a firm disciplinarian in all matters of behaviour.

Within the family group the male role of leadership was unquestioned. Honour and respect were a man's due from wives as well as from children. In difficult relations within his family, as in the case of divorce, he could count on counsel and support from his brothers, who were also ready to help him if cattle were needed for his own or his son's marriage or for payment of court penalties. This male circle of father and sons, father's brothers and their sons, was a closely knit group which functioned in regulating family affairs and in buying and selling cattle for the house to which they belonged. An obligation to help his sons was recognized by the father of a family and this obligation

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

was instructed before marriage how to keep these household possessions in good repair, and how to smear the floor and walls of the hut with cowdung so that they presented the shining surface typical of Ngoni buildings.

The tables which follow show the total population of three villages in each kingdom at the time they were visited in 1938 and 1939, including such data as the number of widows, of plural marriages, of wives for whom *lobola* was given, and the number of men away at work.

	1 Huts	2 Men	3 Women	4 Children	5 Total	6 Men away	7 Widows	8 Plural marriages	9 Lobola marriages
Northern kingdom									
Ezwazini .	23	10	21	28	59	10	4	4	21
Endindeni .	13	9	21	21	51	4	1	4	13
Ehuhangeni	37	19	36	54	109	11	4	5	32
Central kingdom									
Cinkwita .	39	22	39	54	115	13	5	4	2
Mangoso .	60	41	63	78	184	9	18	2	4
Mcakhatha	122	71	112	68	251	30	16	14	12

Earlier in this chapter reference was made to the patterns of residential grouping on a kinship basis, which had evolved from the mixed tribal groups in the very large villages of pre-European days. The choice of these six villages as examples was made mainly on the grounds that they had a considerable proportion of members of Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans and therefore illustrated the traditional Ngoni pattern of kinship grouping. The northern kingdom villages showed the *lusengalo* and *gogo* pattern still extant. It had disappeared in the central kingdom villages with the result that the villages were much larger, and included groups based on house affiliation which would have been divided into separate villages in the north. On the other hand the sub-division of a village in the central kingdom into *banja* was not found in the north.

The data concerning these villages have been analysed to illustrate the households associated with the chief man in the leading clan in the village. These households were those of his wives, his mothers, his brothers, his sons, sisters and daughters. In the north this man was in one case a *mukwazana*, in another a son of a great war *induna*, and in the third the head of a collateral branch of the royal clan. In the central kingdom the chief man in one was a *mukwazana*, in another a grandson of a great war *induna*, and in the third the head of the clan of the royal shadow. The proportion of households belonging to the leading clan was much higher in the smaller villages of the north than in the rest, since they were approximating to a one-family village.

Households[1]

	Total	Leading clan
Northern Nguniland		
Ezwazini	23	15
Endindeni	15	12
Ekhwenguni	37	21
Central Nguniland		
Cinkwita	29	18
Mangwazo	60	26
Mzokhatha	122	37

The proportion of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in the central kingdom to the total population was lower than in the north. The figures given here, however, do not show the total number of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but only the households related on a kinship basis with the leading clan head.

Ezwazini and Endindeni were both built in traditional Ngoni style in horse-shoe formation round a single kraal, with the *indlunkulu* at the head of the kraal, and a recognized right-hand and left-hand grouping. Ezwazini had become the head village of the Sibande clan since its owner, Samson Sibande, on his father's death had gone out from his father's village and made this his *kwawapahi* village. His big wife, of the royal clan, was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his mother, and there was another wife on the right and left hand. Of the older generation there was only one widow of his father, belonging to the same house as his mother. Of his generation there were five brothers, one of the same mother as Samson, and four sons of the surviving widow of his father. There was also the widow of a dead brother by the same mother. Two sisters of Samson were in the village, one married to the *induna* of his mother's house, whose family lived on the right-hand side of the kraal, and one a deserted widow who had returned to her brother's protection. All the village was one house, that of Samson's own mother.

Endindeni was a *gqo* village owned by Zibekere Makwakwa who was the son of a famous war *induna* and was of the *gqo* house of his father. His brother, who was the son of the big house, had moved out to his own village. The village was composed entirely of his family with the exception of an age mate with whom he had an *ukuhlo* relationship, who lived with his two wives on the left-hand side of the kraal. Zibekere's big wife was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his own mother, and his second wife was also of her house. Of the older generation there was one widow of his father, and one widow of his father's brother; of his own generation, one younger brother of the same mother. There were four sons of his big wife and two of his second

[1] In all six villages the total number of households included two or more kinsmen.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

wife. The village with its single kraal was 'of one house', and it was widely known as a good village by Ngoni standards, because, as the local people said, 'all the men are Makwakwa men'.

Eluhangeni was a *gugo* village where the spirit of Mtenje Jere, the son of a brother of Zwangendaba, was guarded. The kinship group of Mwanamdoko Jere, the owner of the village, were all of one house, that of his mother who was dead. Her place in the *indlunkulu* had been taken by his big wife who also inherited the guardianship of the spirit of Mtenje. There was one widow of his father in the village, but she had become a Christian and therefore could not guard the spirit. Mwanamdoko had two wives, and three widows of his brothers by the same mother were also in the village. One brother by another mother was the only one of his generation still alive and he had two sons and two grandsons living in the *cigodlo* behind the *indlunkulu*. All Mwanamdoko's family were grouped round one kraal. There were two other kraals with family groups round them in the village, one belonging to the *induna* of his dead mother, and one to an age mate who had been in his regiment. The *induna's* group belonged to the same house as Mwanamdoko, but the pattern of the three distinct groups each with its own kraal was more like that of the *banja* in the central kingdom.

In the central kingdom the relationships of the various groups in a village followed a different pattern from that in the north. Instead of the *kanengulu* and *gugo* characteristics where the family groups were integrated into houses, the southern pattern was that of a conquered village with the Ngoni element superimposed. In Cinkwita and in Mzukhatha the village headman and his family group had originally been conquered, then established as an outlying village, and finally chosen for the permanent settlement of a family group belonging to an Ngoni clan when they left the royal village after it broke up. In Cinkwita there were three kraals associated with three *banja*. Two of the *banja* belonged to kinship groups of Ntumba clans, and the head of one was known as the headman of the village. The head of the *banja* of Cinkwita Ndau, the Ngoni clan group, was his eldest son Wilkinson, whose wife was of a leading Swazi clan, the Magwagwa. His family group consisted of his wife, two sons and three daughters; a brother and his two daughters; the widow of a dead brother and his two sons and a daughter; three sisters, one of whom had married the brother of the village headman and one who was a widow; and a widowed sister of his father. This family grouping expressed in terms of households illustrates what has already been referred to several times, namely the tendency of the heads of leading Ngoni families in the central kingdom to keep, in addition to their sons, their sisters and daughters in the village after marriage, even when *lobola* had been given. It also illustrates the comparatively small number of plural marriages in the south among the younger men.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Mangono, as its name suggests, was the head village of the Ngono clan. It had been originally settled by Ngwazi Ngono who brought with him two family groups of Ntumba clans who had been with him in Songea. These two Ntumba family groups each formed a *banja*, and one had a kraal. The other two *banja* belonged to two elderly Ngono brothers, sons of Ngwazi and of the same house, who had one kraal between them. The senior of these, Mbiri Ngono, had in his *banja* a widow of his father, not his own mother, and nine widows of a dead older brother; his own wife, two sons, two daughters, three grandsons and three granddaughters; and his sister. The *banja* of Cinyama Ngono included two widows of another brother; his own wife, two sons, two daughters, one grandson and one granddaughter. The two brothers between them had to support eleven widows of dead brothers.

Mcakhatha had a dual foundation. The village site was originally one of the outlying villages of the section known as Ziyombe. It was also the head village of the Nzungs clan. Three of the five *banja* into which the village was divided belonged to Ntumba family groups, and the head of one of these was known as the headman of the village. Of the two *banja* belonging to the Nzungs clan, one was a *gugo banja*, the other that of the ruling chief who was a Sub-Native Authority.[1] Within the *gugo banja* was the house of Bambo Mangs in whose hut the spirit of Mputa was guarded. Two other houses in the *gugo banja* were associated with the guardianship of the spirits of the grandfather and father of the ruling chief. There was therefore a house and a *banja* formation existing together, in which the *banja* predominated. The two Nzungs *banja* consisted of two family groups, one associated with the ruling chief and one with his paternal uncle in charge of the *gugo* section. The chief's *banja* included his own five wives, one sister and two brothers by the same mother, and two sisters and four brothers by other mothers. The *banja* of the head of the *gugo* section included his own five wives and two widows whom he had inherited from the former chief, his elder brother, three children and two sisters by other mothers; three of his sons. It also included a widow of his father, and nine widows of his dead brother who had not been inherited; and the households of Bambo Mangs and her daughter and granddaughter for whom the father of the ruling chief had assumed responsibility. The Ngoni family pattern of this village was more complex than that of Cinkwita or Mangono because of the clearly marked *gugo* section existing alongside that of the ruling chief. It showed, however, the general characteristics of Ngoni family grouping in the central kingdom, keeping sisters and daughters in the village after marriage while retaining responsibility for widows of fathers and brothers. There were three Nzungs kraals, two in the *gugo banja* and one in the chief's *banja*, but the cattle were always referred to

[1] In northern Nguniland the ruling chief would have moved out of this village on his father's death, leaving the *gugo banja* in the *gugo* village.

as belonging to the houses. The relatively large number of cattle and the high ranking of the Nzunga clan accounted for the number of *lobolo* marriages.

Family structure in individual and group life

As individuals and in family groups members of leading Ngoni clans claimed and exercised leadership in their villages. The leading families in the area of a *mukwamama* owning a head village, and the small Ngoni family groups in a larger non-Ngoni setting, all expected and received 'honour' (*ulemu*). The tendency in the central kingdom to marry up, and in the northern kingdom to marry into the clan of the mother if it were a high-ranking one, emphasized the importance attached to the rank and prestige of certain clans. This attitude towards family prestige was more noticeable in the central kingdom where individuals were quick to announce who was their mother or wife if that information would enhance their reputation.

The leadership of high-ranking families was not only a matter of claiming prestige. It carried with it, on the male and the female side, responsibility for regulating the affairs of the village and the house and the *kunja*. Quarrels had to be composed, if possible before they came to court, troubles over deserted wives looked into, provision made for hospitality and for keeping the village premises in order. Informants emphasized again and again that in Ngoni villages where many men and women were of Nzuni clans, order and cleanliness were to be expected. This was not always the case, but it was strikingly illustrated in two of the villages referred to in this chapter—Endindeni in the northern and Mangono in the central kingdom.

In day-to-day village affairs much mutual help was given by members of Ngoni families to each other, especially by the men to widowed mothers and sisters, and by the husband's brothers to wives whose [illegible] away in wide [illegible] in the village economy by the emigration of males called for considerable organization on the part of those who were left. Ngoni male leaders of families and heads of a *kunja*, and the women heads of the houses, all had to include the needs of these 'deserted' women in their own planning. In the northern kingdom, in spite of its relative poverty, better care was taken of wives whose husbands were away because the strong virilocal tradition emphasized this type of help.

In rearing and training children the Ngoni family structure and relationships provided direction and responsibility. We shall discuss in the next chapter on age sets the significance of birth and puberty ceremonies in Ngoni life. More significant, however, than any ceremony was the continuous provision for the training of children, adolescents and young adults in correct behaviour. This duty fell on the women as far as young children and girls were concerned, and on the men for the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

with the main activities of the groups, though it did to some extent illustrate mutual relationships.

Age-Set terms

	Northern Ngoni	*Central Ngoni*
All children	*abantwana*	*ana*
Young men even if married	*amajaha*	*anyamata*
Young girls before puberty	*inkukwana*	*mabutho*
Young girls past puberty	*intombi*	*anamuli*
All married women	*abafazi*	*akazi*
Senior men	*amadoda*	*madoda*
Senior women	*amanina*	*manina*

One of the most characteristic forms of Ngoni village organization was the *lawozi*, or boys' dormitory. It included the older boys in the group called 'children' and the young men until they married, who were in fact called *amajaha* after they had left the *lawozi* and married and had huts of their own. The age for entering the *lawozi* was approximately seven years, and was as a rule determined by the age when a child began to get his second teeth. When a child was going about the village with several gaps in his front teeth, his companions jeered at him if he still slept in his grandmother's hut, and his father took the view that it was time he stopped playing like a child and took up seriously the job of herding goats and calves. There was often some hesitation, especially among boys who were not so well grown for their age, at taking the plunge and going to live in the *lawozi*, since once made the step could not be retraced. It was primarily an individual decision. It meant leaving the protective affectionate care of the grandmother in the evenings, and the care-free play all day round the mother's hut with meals provided by her, for a different sort of existence altogether. *Lawozi* life was rigorous and was dominated by the senior boys living in the hut. The younger

up the hut, sometimes steal food from their mothers' stores, and were beaten if they were slow or careless, or if they threatened to tell the elders in the village what went on in the *lawozi*. The main weapon to get boys into the *lawozi* was the ridicule of their fellows. Once members of the *lawozi* group they were disciplined into obedience by threats and beating. The age range within a *lawozi* was often considerable, from seven to seventeen years.

All the boys in a *lawozi* who were members of houses possessing cattle—and this as a rule included all sons of Ngoni families of trans-Zambezi clans—had to take part in herding. Cattle-herding was a responsible task and could be an arduous one. The boys got up before dawn, opened the gate of the kraal, and took the cattle to water. They milked the cattle on an open space near the village and carried the milk in wooden jars, gourds or petrol tins to the owner of the cattle, keeping

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

ancestor cult in the head village of their clan. If they were asked 'How do you address the spirit (*tete idlozi*)?' they gave the names and genealogy of the former heads of the clan and their attributes if they were known. If they were asked 'Where do you address the spirits?' the reply was always in terms of a particular village where a certain spirit was guarded.

The occasions on which the Swazi clan ancestors were addressed and sacrifices made were in cases of sickness of an important member of the clan. It was sometimes suggested that there might be trouble in the clan villages for which prayer should be made to the clan spirits, but when pressed the only specific instance informants could give was when the cattle did not thrive. They repudiated immediately any idea of prayer to the clan spirits in cases of drought or epidemics in the clan villages since those troubles, wherever they occurred, could only be helped by the spirits of the Paramounts who were concerned with all the land and all its people.

The procedure followed in the clan head village was the same as that for addressing the spirits of the Paramounts. In that village a diviner was consulted, he named the spirit who should be addressed, a beast was sacrificed and prayers were made. This was the Ngoni pattern of the ancestor cult, and it was limited to the Swazi and some of the trans-Zambesi clans. Its correct observance required that combination of cattle, houses, and known genealogies which only the leading clans possessed.

The living and the dead

At times such as funerals, and when talking about the ancestor cult, the Ngoni often used the phrase: 'Death cannot cut life.' They believed that human spirits had a continued existence after death, and that this existence was related to the place where they had dwelt, the people who were of their family and clan, and the cattle which belonged to their [illegible]. This continued association was not an automatic process. It had to be assured by the correct performance of the burial rites, the observance of stages of mourning and the deliberate 'bringing back' of the spirit to the village where it would be guarded and honoured after the final mourning ceremony was over.

In the Ngoni funeral rites there were distinctive elements in the burial of those belonging to Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In handling the corpse the legs were bent and drawn up to the body and the arms folded and crossed each side of the neck, so that the corpse seemed to be sitting and holding its head in its hands. It was wrapped in the skin of a newly killed beast. In the central kingdom men and women of Swazi clans were wrapped first in a sheep-skin, with a cow-skin put over it. The grave was a circular pit, with a small side chamber or shelf where the body was placed in a sitting position, propped up with large stones and facing south-east to the ancestral homeland. Personal possessions, such as skins and shields and baskets, were either put in the grave or taken to be

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

764 burned immediately after the burial on the banks of the stream where
184 the living performed their ritual washing. Small children who were related to the dead took charcoal in their hands, and walked up to the grave backwards and threw the charcoal in without looking. Some leaders of the Swazi clans were buried on the edge of the kraal of the house to which they belonged, and the fence was enlarged to include the grave. The Ngoni comment on this place of burial was: 'If we make a grave, we make it outside the kraal, and afterwards build the kraal round that place so that cattle may walk over it and lie on it. Thus it may become flat as if it were nothing, for Ngoni people do not want a grave to [765] be seen from the outside.' The women who were near relatives of the dead were allowed to mourn in the hut where the person had died, or they could if they chose take part in the war-songs and dances which were the only form of mourning allowed to the male relatives and to the men and women of the village who were not closely related to the dead person. The usual procedure was for a group of older women to wail and sob in the hut, but for all the rest, men and women, to mourn in the Ngoni way by taking part in war-dances and songs.

Much of this ritual appears to have had as its purpose to remove the 764 fear of death from the living. That was the explanation of why the 182 children threw charcoal in the grave—that they should not remember with fear the dead person being put in the earth. The obliteration of the grave site on the edge of the kraal had a dual purpose. One has been already referred to—that the grave should not be seen. The other was to identify the grave of a leading man or woman with the kraal site and the cattle herded there. If the village moved and a new kraal was set up, people would still say 'X was buried here', adding 'He was buried here when we were on Dowowe—or in Songea', referring to an earlier site of the village. Placing the corpse facing south-east, and singing Ngoni war-songs which had come from the south, linked the newly dead with the ancestral dead, and emphasized the chain of communication between the living and the dead, which a new ancestral spirit could help to forge. It was establishing this means of communication which was the dominant note in the ritual of the funeral and in the post-burial rites.

When a death took place, the first action taken after the corpse had been prepared and wrapped in a skin was to send out a summons to come and mourn. We saw in the chapter on the Paramount that at his death the summons was in the formula 'The skies have fallen.' For others the announcement was: 'So and so has died. Come and mourn.' The [765] obligation to mourn was binding. If relatives and fellow clansmen could not come at the time of the burial, or were away in the south, one of their first duties on returning to their home village was to go and mourn by the kraal where the dead person was buried. This was intended partly to show sympathy for the bereaved, but also to acknowledge and salute a new ancestral spirit, and to demonstrate the re-integration of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

rocky outcrops. In September, several weeks before the rains begin, the trees burst out into red foliage, making scarlet rings and patches around the mountains and along the valleys, while through the hard-baked earth spring gladioli and orchids. This is the time of the bush fires when grass is burned and men and boys go hunting. The first rain storms bring a transformation. Fresh green grass covers the land, and scarlet leaves turn bright green on bushes and trees, and later marigolds turn the hillsides golden and yellow arums and red-hot pokers appear along the roadsides.

In making this high plateau their home, the Ngoni chose it primarily for the pasture lands for their cattle. They sited their villages on the ridges or the slopes of the hills, where they had a commanding position, with access to water, good land for cultivation in the shallow dips and river valleys, and woodlands where they could cut poles for their houses and cattle kraals.

The traditional Ngoni village was built in a horse shoe formation round a circular cattle kraal. Larger villages had a central kraal with huts round it, and several other kraals each with its horseshoe grouping of huts. A large village, and there were many of over a hundred huts, seemed at first sight to be a sprawling collection of huts and kraals, with a few tall trees about and several red ant-hills. A pattern of hut sites became apparent, however, once the family and kinship grouping was known. Behind each hut was one or more circular grain stores built on platforms, large ones for maize and smaller ones for millet or ground-nuts. In the Central Ngoni kingdom, and sometimes in the Northern kingdom, there were tall reed fences round the huts of leading families, enclosing an open space where household work went on, and wood and grass were stored.

There were two focal points in each village, reproduced on a minor scale in the hamlets round each kraal. One was the 'big house'[1] at the head of the kraal, where the leading woman had her home.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Military service, obedience to the law,
recognition of the Paramount's supremacy were therefore 187
the main traditional forces uniting the mixed populations
in the kingdoms.

Ngoni society

Although all people living in the Ngoni kingdoms were 641
subjects of the Paramount, only those who could trace their
descent from families who crossed the Zambezi River were
recognized as 'true Ngoni'. Four main characteristics marked
off this true Ngoni group from the rest. The first was their [614]
clan name, giving them an authentic origin south of the
Zambezi. The second was a marriage contract sealed by [589]
handing over cattle, which established the offspring as
'children of their fathers', for, as they said, 'where the
children are, the cattle are not'. The third was patrilineal [611]
descent and inheritance through the male line, and patri- [428]
local residence at marriage, so that the wife came as a [591]
'stranger' to her husband's people and village. The fourth
was membership of a 'house', the social group of male [592]
members of Ngoni families with their wives and children
round a leading woman. Everyone was born into a 'house'
and the men remained in it for life, the women until their
marriage. For special reasons children could be adopted [597]
into another house than the one into which they were born.

In a few of the smaller villages of North Nyasaland, con- 621
sisting of ten to fifteen huts, all the men were true Ngoni, 184
descendants of one or more former warriors in the same
regiment, who had chosen to set up their own villages after [701]
the British had taken over the country. In such villages the
cultural pattern of Ngoni life could be seen clearly, but they
were not typical of the Ngoni kingdoms. There was always
a mixture of peoples in the larger villages, dominated by a [563]
group of true Ngoni families.

This group of true Ngoni families were the social and 186
cultural aristocracy of these villages. They considered them- 563
selves superior to and distinct from the other ethnic elements 621

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Africa. All males had to pay taxes to the government, at first in kind and later in cash, thus hastening the advent of a money economy. Most drastic of all the changes was the ban on warfare, which cut at the roots of Ngoni political organization, and at their system of training their young men.

In the Northern Ngoni kingdom, the Scottish Mission preceded the administration by more than twenty years, and were largely responsible for a peaceful take-over of the area. In the Central kingdom there was a brief war of resistance, in which the Ngoni armies were dispersed and the Paramount killed on his way to trial. In this area mission activity, under several missions, never achieved, especially in education, the ascendancy which the Scottish Mission achieved among the Ngoni in the North.

As one result of the cessation of warfare, and of school education leading to paid employment, there was an economic redistribution of wealth among the Ngoni. Formerly wealth had been associated with political power, and the Paramounts and their subordinate chiefs and heads of clans had command of large herds of cattle, received the spoils from wars and raids, and used the labour of conquered villages to cultivate the land. After the missions and government were established, men with schooling began to earn money as teachers, clerks and mechanics, and so to command financial resources which were not available to the traditional leaders. The young men responded to the labour recruitment which became a permanent feature in Nyasaland from the 1890s, and they went far afield to many types of work.

It was evident, just before World War II, that the Ngoni kingdoms had had a profound shock from which they never fully recovered, in spite of the recognition of their Paramount Chiefs by the Native Authorities Ordinance in 1934. The older men looked back with nostalgia to what they called 'the time of peace, when the Europeans were not here to trouble us'. These older men were known as 'the generation of former days', because they had taken part in warfare

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

as young men, and had known the independence and supremacy of the Ngoni kingdoms. The expression 'everything is finished now' was often on their lips, especially when faced by new demands from the government, or by rebellious attitudes from their former subject peoples.

'The middle generation' was the term applied to the men who had as children known the Ngoni kingdoms in their prime. Though they had never fought as warriors nor been enrolled in an age-regiment, some of them had gone to the wars as young boys, carrying the gear for their older brothers. Many of these men, especially in the North, came under the influence of the missions, and became teachers, clerks, ministers and hospital assistants, married Christian wives and brought up their children in Christian, but Ngoni Christian, families. These men never lost their attachment to the Ngoni way of living, and many of them had made a successful synthesis of the old and the new ways. They stood, as they said, 'between' the generations, for they knew and understood both sides of an immensely different way of living and standard of values. Their children were 'the generation of today', who had no personal experience of past Ngoni ascendancy, and who took mission schooling and working for wages as a normal feature of their life.

When I lived in Ngoni villages, such as those described briefly in this chapter, Ngoni values and attitudes dominated social relationships. There was a determined struggle on the part of all responsible for child training to inculcate these Ngoni ideas and ways of living. The senior men and women were aware of the constant and increasing infiltration into their way of living of ideas, attitudes and behaviour coming from other ethnic groups in their midst. In addition their culture was being undermined by European influences in the schools, in the money economy, and from modern political developments, emphasizing an all-Nyasaland sentiment rather than loyalties based on ethnic grouping. Ngoni pride of race, and a consciousness that they had a

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

answers to them somewhere, then there have been some vital omissions in the narrative.

Clues to this study

In relating this study to other field studies and analyses of socialization techniques and processes, I have not attempted to present here any general assessment of similar or related studies, much less any review of the field as a whole, since I have touched on both in earlier publications.[1] Instead I have brought into this chapter one or two clues or guide lines from other sources which seemed to me to elucidate some of my problems, particularly in regard to four main aspects of this study, which have already been mentioned in Chapter I and which to a large extent set the limits and determine the emphases of this book. The 'true Ngoni' were a society within a society, a distinct cultural group within the Ngoni kingdom. This society of theirs had sharp edges, definable and recognizable limits, and that partly accounted for their own awareness of themselves as distinct from, though at so many points connected with, the neighbouring peoples. Their culture, that is their way of living within this society, had definite values which they strove to maintain, and this was one of the reasons why the ideal Ngoni personality pattern, and their endeavour to see it reproduced in each child, was easy to recognize. In order to safeguard their society and maintain their culture they exercised a fairly rigid social control over the upbringing of their children, which resulted in something approaching a 'system' of training and educating children. Set against this conservation of traditional values however was the reality and extent of changes due to external circumstances mentioned at the end of Chapter I. In the face of these changes the Ngoni showed that they could adapt some of them to their own purposes, and they made use of the schools, for example, once they approved of them, to help adjust their

[1] See Appendix (j)

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of this book, especially Chapters IV and V will show how the organization of Ngoni society and the cultural way of living in it, necessarily surrounded the life of children and the training given to them with a much wider horizon. We shall talk about the family, the household, the village as the setting of Ngoni child life, but these terms have to be interpreted according to the Ngoni social organization, sketched very briefly in Chapter I and set out at length in my earlier book *The Ngoni of Nyasaland*. Looked at from another angle, we can see that a young child's horizon in Ngoni villages was limited at first to what he saw around him and the people who had daily or frequent contact with him and who understood and supplied his daily needs. But that circle of people forming a young child's contacts was from the beginning much wider than the individual family which a child was born into. When he began to run about and to pass beyond the restricted confines of the household, it was as we shall see, the duty and responsibility of all Ngoni adults to notice his behaviour and correct him when necessary.

The relationships inside the large Ngoni families, between one family and another in a Ngoni village, with related families in other villages, with all members of the same clan living in an area—these were threads in the web of kinship and clanship which united the Ngoni people. These threads were also inseparable from the political links between the people and their territorial chief, and between the whole people and the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The difference, however, between the Ngoni kingdom under the Paramount which included all his subjects of Ngoni and non-Ngoni ethnic groups, and the Ngoni aristocracy in the villages was a profound difference. It was the latter who understood, appreciated and sought to hand on to their children Ngoni ways of living based on Ngoni values. Hence in most villages there were sharp distinctions between standards of behaviour within Ngoni families and in non-Ngoni families.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

184 563 [867] families. It was, however, demanded from Ngoni children that they should behave in the socially approved manner to everyone, and not only to their Ngoni kin and fellow clansmen. And it was evident in non-Ngoni families that there was often some attempt to teach Ngoni standards of behaviour to their children, but that such attempts broke down when their family system was not organized to enforce the necessary training.

576 577 [867] *The goals of Ngoni child training*

Ngoni adults, and especially the senior men and women who were in control of the training of children and themselves deeply conscious of the traditional values of their society, summed up the aims of the upbringing of children in one word 'respect'. The vernacular term *ulemu*—in the old Ngoni language *hlonipa*—is a concept very difficult to translate adequately, certainly to convey its full meaning in a single English word or phrase. The nearest terms are honour and respect, and though in some contexts it is often translated as politeness, that is too limited a term. In fact they had another vernacular term to express courtesy which was to them one way of showing respect. The concept of *ulemu* included the recognition that a particular person or office was entitled to honour; that all behaviour to that person must express respect; and that by showing respect in language, posture and action, a child or adult so behaving, shared in that honour which they were acknowledging. Conversely, through failing to convey respect, a person, whether child [558] or adult, was 'ashamed' and lost face accordingly. I have just said that a particular person was entitled to honour and therefore to respect in the behaviour of others. The Ngoni said that was the origin of the concept, and it was demonstrated in the punctilious observance of etiquette to all chiefs, and to all leading men and women by everyone else. [858] But there was an extension of this concept to include all older people, and Ngoni children were expected to show

844 ready for burning, and generally cleaned up. The fire in the middle of the hut was rekindled to warm the mother and
[262] baby, and gruel was given to the mother of millet flour, brought from the mother-in-law's hut where it had been cooked. With the help of the other women, the mother
[853] washed her breasts with warm water and massaged them to make the milk flow, ready for the child to suck.

845 The other ethnic groups surrounding the Ngoni in Nyasa-
[184] land considered it disastrous if a child was born face down or with the buttocks first, and twins were dreaded as ill omens. The Ngoni shared none of these beliefs and were particularly considerate for the mother of twins, often killing
[262] a beast to give the mother meat and broth to increase her
[853] flow of milk. The only notice the Ngoni took of the method of presentation at birth was that they gave a child a name
[553] indicative of such a birth. They gave special names for the first and second twin born. If one twin died it was buried under the veranda of the hut and a smooth stone was placed
[766] on top. This stone was used for sitting on, and the surviving twin was held on it when being washed.

Ritual and social uncleanness

846 From the time just before the birth took place the hut and
783 everything in it, and the woman and her new baby, were considered ritually unclean. If she had to leave the hut to answer the call of nature, she covered herself with a cloth from head to foot and avoided meeting anyone. She did no cooking herself until the ritual uncleanness was removed. Food was brought to her from her mother-in-law's hut or from her co-wives' huts, a special dish was used and washed separately, and she did not use her hands to eat with but a wooden spoon which was also washed separately. During the period of seclusion within the hut one of the senior women who helped at the birth slept in the hut with the mother and baby. No other young children were allowed to sleep in the hut, though they might come in to see the baby. All males

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

young wife, an Ngoni husband would not normally support her against his own mother. In the case of his child, who was born a member of his family, house and clan, his mother and her circle of senior women had uncontested sway.

The second features of Ngoni social organization which the 'arrival of a new stranger' demonstrated was the women's interest in and capacity for planning and organization. The senior women had no doubt about what steps to take and who should take them, from the time when labour began till after weaning. The preparations for the birth, the receiving of the child, the care of mother and baby after birth, the ritual cleansing of the hut, the presentation of the child to the public—all these acts up to and including weaning were planned with what seemed an elaborate organization when first observed, but which turned out to be standard Ngoni practice. Two particular aspects of this organization stood out as different from the local practices: the provision for artificial feeding of the child, and the role played by nurse girls and women helpers.

The main variants in this pattern arose from three causes: the effect of marriage with women of other ethnic groups who married into Ngoni families and had to accept the pattern of authority imposed by the house organization of Ngoni women. They therefore had to follow in its main lines the procedures we have described for the birth and care of infants. But Ngoni men and women deplored in particular two non-Ngoni elements which were creeping into the conduct of birth and post-natal ceremonies. One was the attitude taken during difficult labour when the women attending to the mother tried to force her to confess to illicit sexual relations which the non-Ngoni believed to be the cause of the delayed birth. The other was the prohibition on a wife putting sált in the food she was cooking while she was menstruating or at any other ritually unclean period. The true Ngoni despised this salt taboo and the women of Ngoni families did not practise it.

CHILDREN OF THEIR FATHERS

591 Changes in residence at and after marriage influenced the composition of the group of relatives who assisted at births. In
● 184 the central kingdom daughters of leading men in the village
844 often stayed in their father's village at marriage. Hence the father's sisters were often present at the birth and the wife's mother and her sisters might be living in the village. If the
[614] wife belonged to a higher ranking Ngoni clan than her husband, her relatives shared responsibility with those of the husband's family.

177 As may be imagined the struggle between mother-in-law control and western medical practices at childbirth was a
844 protracted one. Even when there was a younger member of the husband's family trained as a nurse or midwife, she by
[759] no means had her way in organizing the conduct of the birth. She might introduce a few hygienic measures such as clean cloths instead of old rags, and sterilized thread for tying the cord. But unless the senior women were frightened, and they seldom were, by prolonged and difficult labour, the Ngoni families were averse to taking a young mother into hospital.
[606] The chief reason was the challenge to the authority of the mother-in-law, especially when the younger women who had some knowledge of western medical practices questioned the advice of the senior women.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

and demonstration of the group values. The first two, physical and moral strength, and working hard and persistently at allotted tasks, were, as we have seen, instilled into children from the stage of second teeth onward. The second two, dignity and wisdom, were to a large extent values implicit in adult life, and in the case of wisdom seen specially in the contribution made by senior men and women to community life. Dignity, however, had an ambivalent meaning, as did dominance among the group values. It covered not only language, deportment, self-control, accepted rank and precedence within the hierarchy on all social occasions, but the more subtle and very typical Ngoni attitude towards 'losing face'. In the sense that young adults and even older children hated being rebuked in public because it made them lose face, it belonged to younger people as well as to older, to those called the 'humble ones' as well as to the 'great ones'.

All the emphases in child training on language, deportment, self-control, manners and inter-personal behaviour of all kinds were related to the value of human dignity, and to the concept of a person's 'human nature' as being something to be respected and built up, and carefully guarded, since it was very vulnerable.

At the end of Chapter II when some Ngoni values were mentioned, wisdom was contrasted with cleverness, and equated with knowledge, good judgement, ability to control others and keep the peace, and skill in the use of speech. The young Ngoni headmaster in the first village described in Chapter I said reflectively one evening, after listening to some of the elders talking with me about Ngoni values, 'Yes, we are different in our generation. We are proud, but they had wisdom.' It was an acknowledgement of the pretensions which his generation had begun to claim as a result of the new knowledge in the schools. It was also a recognition that the accumulated wisdom of the generations of his father and grandfather had in it an understanding of values which the younger generation had not yet acquired.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

tion. In all the selection of individuals to 'enter the place' of an important person who had died, the new holder of the place had to measure up to Ngoni personality standards and be acknowledged as a 'good character'.

The new kinds of occupation open to Ngoni men as a result of education in the mission schools were of two main types: those where the holders of the job still lived in the Ngoni kingdom and carried on their work in the setting of a Ngoni village; and those which involved leaving the village and living and working outside Ngoniland, more or less out of sight and out of control of Ngoni elders.

Some of the mission teachers, ministers, and evangelists returned to live in Ngoni villages after they had completed their training, though others of course were posted elsewhere. In one of the villages described in Chapter I there had been in the early days of mission work fierce and continuous opposition to the opening of schools, as well as to the preaching of Christianity. I mentioned the old evangelist who had been threatened with death by the chief when he first took up his work. If he had left under those threats he would have lost out for ever among his people, for he would have been called a coward. He stayed, cultivated his land, grew his own food, was a great hunter, was respectful to the chief and elders, brought up his children to respect Ngoni traditions. He gradually gained the reputation of being brave, a 'gentle' man, a powerful and fluent speaker in the church on Sundays, a man of wisdom and judgement, and he was constantly asked for his opinion on village affairs. Most of the village, Christian and non-Christian alike, went to the church service on Sundays, sang the Ngoni hymns, listened to his sermons in the Ngoni language, sprinkled with Ngoni proverbs and illustrated by episodes from Ngoni life and history. Very few people in that village over twenty-five years old were Christians, but the leading Ngoni families allowed him to baptize younger and older children and to instruct them in Sunday-school. The Ngoni elders contributed to the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

homes, in their communities and in their national life. There are several reasons for this tendency. One is a recognition of the limitations of individual psychology as a guide to the understanding of how children grow up. This arises from the newly perceived importance of culture, in the anthropological sense of that word, as a total way of living of a specific group of people, which may be that of a fairly homogeneous large group, or of several smaller groups, differing culturally from each other but drawn together by political, economic or residential ties. Thus Ngoni culture as described in this book could be regarded as that of a small group within the Ngoni kingdom and within Ngoni villages where other people of differing cultures were to be found. A number of references were made in this study to the cultural differences within Ngoni villages in spite of the proximity of living conditions. We find the same kind of situation in many countries today, whether those of a western way of living or a non-western. The French Swiss in Switzerland for example are a distinct cultural group within the Swiss nation, and they are divided into the sub-cultural groups of Protestants and Catholics, each with a characteristic way of living which shows itself not only in differences of religious belief.

As we look round the world we see societies, even nations or parts of nations like the French Swiss, trying to hold on either to their total culture, or to those parts of it such as language, religion, forms of family life, distinctive dress and food, which seem to them to have special significance for them and their children. No cultures, or virtually none, are unaffected by modern changes brought about by political, economic or social influences and forces. And there are societies and nations anxious to change their culture in order to bring it into line with the demands of modern, mainly western, life. The educationist who is aware of other systems than his own soon realises that an education system and what is taught in it can be used to change culture, or to perpetuate certain elements in it. This attempt to balance

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

from the recollections of informants and the accounts of contemporary writers. Even in a society as rapidly expanding as was the Ngoni before 1898, the majority of the population at any one time consists of people who are politically unimportant. What were remembered and what was recorded at the time were the marriages of leaders and their close relatives. It is they, more than others, who were distinctively Ngoni, and it was by their actions that the values of Ngoni society were emphasized and developed. Their marriages were important in maintaining tribal solidarity and it is the system exemplified in these marriages that we have been describing. But the recent captives, the poor, the unsuccessful warriors, the junior sons of junior sons, they also married and their marriages were at least as numerous as those of their more fortunate brethren, despite the large bands of wives acquired by successful men.

The data in our sample provide suggestions as to both the relative frequency of marriage without payment and the kind of relationship that held between payment and status of spouse. The eight cattle were offered by one of Mpezeni's senior lieutenants as bridewealth for the daughter of a man of Nsenga origin. Two junior sons of this lieutenant each offered a beast as legalization payment for a wife, one of whom was the daughter of a divisional head. A legalization payment of unknown magnitude was made in a marriage between a village headman and a daughter of another of Mpezeni's senior lieutenants. These four marriages we may regard as important marriages between people of high status accompanied by marriage payments which usually were substantial. Among persons of low status we find that in six out of the seven marriages in which no payment was made, one or both of the spouses had been captured. Intermediately we have the remaining two marriages in which the legalization payment was made and the one in which 'snuff-box' was paid, all involving people of low or middle status and accompanied by relatively small payments, namely a chicken, some cloth, and tobacco. This positive correlation between status and payment holds for thirteen out of the fourteen marriages, but one marriage without payment was between one of the same junior sons of the lieutenant and the daughter of a man of Kalanga origin.

From such evidence as there is, it seems probable that marriages between people of high status were usually accompanied by substantial payments. At the same time, many of the marriages of people of low status and some of the unimportant marriages of men of high status took place without payments. What proportion of the total these marriages accounted for we cannot now ever hope to know. However since they amount to half of our pre-1898 sample it seems probable that they constituted a considerable fraction of all the marriages contracted at that time.

The payment of 'snuff-box' and bridewealth were the crucial events establishing a marriage, but there were a number of other transfers of beer and cattle, and a number of ceremonies without

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Malawi FR4

Cewa dances, speak Cewa, and are to a lesser extent internally organized on Cewa lines. They do not form a distinct class of village in Ngoni country, and are inextricably bound by ties of kinship with their neighbours. But there are fewer traces of the former pre-1898 system of organization in such villages than in those which have a remembered history linking them with the glorious past.[1]

3. Christianity

At the same time as Ngoni values were being undermined from within by the Cewa, they were attacked from without by the Whites. The first missionaries to settle in the area arrived in 1889, although there had been some earlier contact. They attempted to convert Ngoni to Christianity, and therefore to monogamy and pre-marital chastity. In chastity the missionaries were allied with the Ngoni against the Cewa; in monogamy the missions fought against Ngoni allied to Cewa. New rituals were introduced and a new hierarchy developed, composed of priests, evangelists and deacons. However, in this region, unlike much of the rest of Africa, the impact of Christianity has not produced a distinctive legal status of persons married by Christian rite. The Administration's earliest piece of marriage legislation was the *North-Eastern Rhodesia Marriage Regulations*, 1903.[2] There was specific provision for monogamous marriages between Africans, with penalties for bigamy and detailed rules for the division of property left by Africans married under these regulations and dying intestate. Few, if any, marriages involving Africans were made in this form, for it seems that the missions did not license themselves under the Regulations and their ceremonies therefore did not have legal significance to the Administration. These elaborate provisions were repealed by the *Northern Rhodesia Marriage Proclamation*, 1918.[3] Since then the only form of marriage performed within Northern Rhodesia between Africans that has legal significance in the eyes of the Administration is marriage 'in accordance with native law and custom'. What constitutes such a marriage has never been rigidly defined.

The missions themselves have differed in their attitude towards indigenous marriage. One mission insists that all 'customary obligations' must be fulfilled in addition to Christian rites, another holds that it is wrong to transfer wealth from one side to another in marriage, while a third holds that the fulfilment or not of any customary obligations is not the concern of the church. The Native

[1] Cf. Read, 'Tradition and prestige' and 'Moral code' for an account of some of these changes in structure and values, based on observations of three Ngoni kingdoms.

[2] Government Notice No. 2 of 1903, *British Central Africa Gazette*, 1st, x, 1, 31 January 1903.

[3] N.R. No. 10 of 1918, *Northern Rhodesia Government Gazette*, viii, 11, 7 September 1918.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

he has not been brought up by them but by some other relative. In particular a man is reluctant to discuss his affairs directly with his father if he can get his eldest brother to act as his intermediary. The eldest brother is heir to their father and it is considered that he should act as the channel by which the father is approached. He deals with proposals of marriage arising from his younger siblings and if he approves of them, he refers the matter to their father. This pattern of relations seems most marked in aristocratic families.

9. Widows

While it is a man's eldest brother who helps to arrange his marriage, it is his younger brothers who become pro-husbands to his widows. We have seen that in the old days a widow was usually looked after by a younger brother of the dead man but she continued to live in her dead husband's segment, and the children she bore by her pro-husband were grouped with the children of the dead man. This can still happen but it is no longer the invariable rule. As in the old days, if bridewealth has been paid by the first husband and after his death his widow goes to live with someone else, the second husband or pro-husband cannot offer bridewealth and the children he begets belong to the dead husband and take his descent name.

Some indication of the extent to which widows remain with their dead husbands' kin is given by data collected in two villages. All the women now living in these villages had between them experienced widowhood 31 times. In two instances (6 per cent) the widow had been cared for by her dead husband's brother; and in 11 instances (35 per cent) the widow took a new husband not directly related to the dead man. In the remaining 18 instances (58 per cent) the widow had not married again and was living alone.

A man may die at any stage of his marriage. If he is betrothed to a girl and then dies, the betrothal passes to a younger brother. When the girl is old enough, the younger brother marries her as though she had been betrothed to him in the first place and the children he has by her are his own children. Similarly, if a betrothed girl dies before she is married, the betrothal passes to a younger sister.

If a man dies after he has been properly married his widows have definite roles to play. For a month after his death, they must wear the signs of mourning, and they are in danger of *mdulo*[36] if they commit adultery during that time. They must be ready to wail when distant visitors arrive to mourn. At the end of a month they brew beer, and there is a joyous party. A year after the death there is another party, and the fate of the widows is discussed. If none of the younger brothers or kinsmen of the dead man wish to look after the widows, they are free to go their own way, and there may be a formal statement of divorce. They are in any case now spoken

[36] See above, p. 48.

5:Allan C-5 (1941)1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Lamba FQ8

The people in the original area were short of food but by no means at starvation level. This was ascertained by taking seven sample villages at random within the congested area and weighing their entire food stocks during the first fortnight of February. From these samples the following data were obtained.

Grain Stocks of Seven Ngoni Villages
(February 1941)

Total population			Total grain stocks
Men	Women	Children	lb.
292	389	531	24,710

Making no allowance for a special reserve of seed against a possible need for replanting, or for loss in preparing flour and for other reasons, the grain stock represents not more than 20 days usage, and supplies would probably be exhausted by early March. There was much variation between villages; one exceptional village had enough grain for 46 days while in another the grain stocks represented only 4 days supply. It will be remembered, however, that in an African social system, kinship obligations tend to even out the distribution of food supplies.

In striking contrast to these samples, a village which had recently made an illicit move to unoccupied private land was found to have, at the end of February, grain stocks representing 81 days supply. The effects of falling yields first make themselves felt in the bad years and it should be noted that the sampling was done in a year following a good climatic season. It will also be noted that villages which would in all probability have reached the starvation level had already transferred themselves.

There is, then, a time lag between the beginning of over-crowded conditions and the point at which obvious symptoms of land degeneration and soil erosion appear. The length of this time lag clearly depends on a number of factors acting together; the type of land and the system used on it, the degree of congestion, the original population density and the rate of population increase, if any. A further variable time lag elapses before conditions of general food shortage are reached. Under some conditions the process of land degradation may result in food shortage within a very few years, while in other cases this result may not appear for twenty years or more.

Within ten years of the creation of reserves in the Mkushi District obvious land degradation and recurrent food shortages in some areas had reached such a stage as to attract the attention of District Officers, missionaries and other interested persons, and to create an insistent demand for additional land. The population densities in these areas were 18 to 25 persons per square mile. Other areas of the Territory, notably the reserves of the

6:Ratray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

In the study of this language, the student is for- 113
tunate in having two such scholarly works of reference as *A Practical Manual of the Nyanja Language*, by the Rev. A. Hetherwick, M.A., D.D., F.R.G.S., and *A Cyclopædic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language*, by the Rev. D. C. Scott, M.A., D.D., F.R.S.G.S.; on the other hand, there is a striking want of any good prose work in that language. Of 114
translations of the Bible, and other religious books, 121
there are many, but all such works, in the translation, follow the English text almost literally, and contain so many words from foreign sources as to be of little use to the student who, having mastered the grammar and syntax of the language, seeks to enlarge his vocabulary and knowledge of idiomatic expression by reading some prose work. (The ideal 121
translation of the Bible, or other religious work, would be one in which the English sentence is taken, the meaning got at, and this remodelled and transformed according to the native way of thought and expression.) It is to supply such a want that this little work is intended. The aim throughout has been, in the Chinyanja part, to write each sentence as a raw native would speak it. It is a commonly heard saying, that only boys trained at a Mission talk the language "grammatically." This is cor- 191
rect, if by "grammar" we mean a principle of set 197
rules for the speaking of a language. For to the uncivilized native any such rules as those governing our own, and other languages of civilized countries,

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

are unknown, and he talks, "having regard rather to the poetical feeling than to the grammatical position and syntax of a word." But enclitics, tense particles, concords, the various forms of the verb (applied, causative, intensive, reversive, etc.), and all those auxiliary particles such as *ba*, *ka*, *ngo*, *dzi*, and enclitic particles such as *-nso*, *-be*, *-tu*, etc., by which all the finer shades of meaning are expressed, he uses absolutely correctly, and it is with a view of understanding, and making oneself understood, to the raw, uneducated element among these natives, that one should go to the trouble of learning this language.

The customs, stories, etc., recorded herein are those of the natives inhabiting Central Angoniland. They are descendants, for the most part through intermarriage with the Achewa, of the Zulus who came from south of the Zambezi, scattering as they advanced, under different leaderships; those under *Gwaza* (the father of *Sakambewa*), and his *ndewa Chiwere*, settling at Dowa; *Mpezeni*, a son of *Gwaza*, settling near Fort Jameson. *Mpata*, the father of *Chikusi*, after reaching as far as Lake Chirwa, and raiding the Anguru under *Sinjasbwe-reka*, came to Domwe, near Dedza, under promise of cattle from *Sosola*, a *Chipeta*, or *Nchewa* chief. (*Chipeta* and *Nchewa* are synonymous, the former word being a sobriquet bestowed on the *Achewa* who came on to the Angoniland plateau, by the *Achewa* who settled on the Lake shore, the latter referring to the former as the *a chipeta*, i. e. they of the *chipeta* (long grass)). Intermingled with these customs, borrowed for the most part by the conquerors from the conquered, are to be found traces here and there, and here and there a word, which strike the key-note of their past history, now all but forgotten even by themselves. But what is of their

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FRS Ngoni FRS

blame the Europeans for it; but it remains part of the distinctive cultural heritage of the tribe.

As we might expect, notions of this kind do not provide sanctioned standards of conduct nor ideal patterns towards which Ngoni strive. They may be used to explain or justify a state of affairs, as we have seen, but they do not directly determine action. An individual who departs from traditional customs, in these terms, is not necessarily censured. Indeed, men who are knowledgeable about the glorious past do not follow traditional ways any more than do less-well-informed people. According to tradition the Ngoni are a virilocal people, yet if a man goes to live with his wife's relatives his own kinsfolk cannot force him to return by appeal to this virilocal tradition. Traditionally a man avoids his mother-in-law. Yet I once saw an aristocratic man, a great authority on traditional history, on leave from work sitting on a verandah chatting with his mother-in-law. I said to him, "I thought a man should avoid his mother-in-law." He laughed and replied, "Yes, so he should. This behaviour is disgusting, and as soon as I come to live here permanently I shall see that customs are properly followed."

In certain situations the Fort Jameson Ngoni appear as a tribe in contrast to other tribes. The tribe is an administrative unit, with its own chiefs, its own area and sometimes its own District Officer. Representatives from each tribe in the region sit together to form the Native Urban Court and the Provincial Advisory Council. The Ngoni representatives on these bodies tend to present distinctively Ngoni views to contrast with the views of their colleagues. Thus there may be a discussion on wills. There is an Ngoni view, a Cewa view, and so on. The Ngoni representative repeats the old story about bridewealth, virilocal residence, the rights of the eldest son, and these are recorded as being the Ngoni customs in the matter. Even when discussing such an apparently modern issue as wills, the tendency is to go back to the mythical past. It is in terms of this past, in reality as well as in myth, that Ngoni are different from their neighbours. In the present, as contrasted with Europeans, Ngoni and Cewa are much the same. Ngoni pay bridewealth in the same way as the English eat roast beef. It is a national characteristic, but one located in the minds of men rather than observable in their actions or their opinions. Instead of the ramifications and minute observances which distinguish their neighbours, Ngoni express their tribal identity by having distinctive customs which, conveniently, need not be followed.

In the Native Urban Court a similar process appears to operate, but here, unlike in the Advisory Council, there is a greater need to come to grips with real situations which require action, and tribal distinctiveness is tempered with practical reality. In the purely Ngoni Native Courts appeals are made to traditional practice in a different way. The courts are required by the Administration to follow tribal customs and people know that the courts are bound in this way. In fact, however, the courts have continually to deal with new situations and to make decisions which are unprecedented. This is done

9: Read E-S (1935) 1936 FRS Ngoni FRS
Maravi FR4

difference to-day between the attitude of the Ngoni to the Europeans and that of the Chewa, for example. In the vernacular expression the Ngoni say, 'The Europeans spoiled our country'; the Chewa say, 'The Europeans saved us'.

Chamtondwe, then, was the period of Ngoni supremacy, when they established by force of arms their right to rule over the country and its indigenous inhabitants. There was, however, some difference between the political organization of the Ngoni as a conquering horde on the march, and their organization when they finally settled in their present areas. At both times the focus of their organization was warfare—they were a nation under arms. But once settled on land which they had chosen they began to spread a network of political organization over the country, and to plan in terms of 'countries' instead of mobile villages. To-day when they discuss the advent of the Europeans and the consequent 'spoiling' of their country, they recall the days when extensive tribute was paid to their Paramount Chief, chiefs were free to choose good sites for their very big villages, the outlying areas were ruled by *indunas* and lesser chiefs. It was the partial breaking up of this centralized political organization which they regarded as 'spoiling their country', as well as the economic restrictions with regard to land and the prohibition of raiding for new supplies of cattle.

During this time of Ngoni supremacy Ngoni institutions flourished—those institutions which they had brought with them from the south and preserved through their wanderings. When they are telling to-day about these years they speak fervently and reverently of the part played by the Paramount Chief in every side of life, the training for warfare of all the young men, the instruction and supervision of young chiefs by old *indunas*, Ngoni marriage and initiation ceremonies. It was during this time in Mpezeni's country that the *Inquala* or first fruits ceremony was regularly observed at Mzungulensi, the village of the mother of old Mpezeni.[2] At this ceremony the Paramount Chief 'opened' the new food season by the ritual eating of new fruits, especially young maize and pumpkins. It was also the

[1] i.e. *chiefs'* sons.

[2] The description of this *Inquala* given by men and women who took part in it in their youth shows much similarity to the *Inquala* of to-day among the Swazi.

traders and missionaries and officials, they were all impressed with the power of the Ngoni Paramount Chief and the impossibility of getting any footing in the country without his consent and aid. 'Mpezeni[1] is a very powerful chief . . . and shows the greatest dislike to any interference with his governing powers. He has formed a powerful kingdom where his subjects are mainly Chewa, Chipeta and Senga stock, but his power is consolidated by a Zulu and half-Zulu aristocracy.' Such was the official view of the Ngoni state under old Mpezeni expressed by Sir Harry Johnston, and similar impressions are recorded of the Ngoni states in Nyasaland. If this was the European impression of Ngoni supremacy it is easy to picture the feelings of the Ngoni themselves with all their pride of race and of achievements in nation-holding, when for the first time a superior power loomed on their horizon.

VII. The Advent of the Europeans. I have up to the present referred to the three Ngoni areas as if they formed one cultural unit. This is true of their earliest days, and to a large extent of the time called *shawtenden*. In spite of certain minor differences there was then a form of society and of political organization which was the same in all three areas, and they all possessed the same language, traditions, and aristocratic hierarchy. After the advent of the Europeans, however, it becomes impossible to generalize, as both the manner and the results of white penetration varied so much in the three areas. As a study in culture contact where eye-witnesses, both white and black, are still available as informants, it is most illuminating to compare the effects of white contact in Mpezeni's and Mwamben's countries. In Mpezeni's the first contact was commercial, in Mwamben's, missionary. The contrast between Ngoni society in those two districts to-day is startling, and is commented on frequently by the Ngoni themselves. 'See', say Mpezeni's people, 'the Charterland Company came to us. To Mwamben's country it was Dr. Laws. And Dr. Laws's men can speak English to-day and we cannot. Our cattle were taken by the Europeans; Mwamben's were not. That is why they *lobola* their wives to-day with many cattle, and we have only a few cattle.' They often referred to these differences as soon as they knew I was going from

[1] This was the *old* Mpezeni, son of Zwangendaba.

one Ngoni area to another, and it is evident that they are well aware that they met with different kinds of white contact. A frequent topic of discussion in villages is the differences between the administration of N. Rhodesia and of Nyasaland, as well as the policy and attitudes of the different missions.

There is, however, one common factor in the situation called culture contact, existing wherever the Ngoni meet any Europeans. Like the Zulu, the Ngoni do not necessarily take kindly to white ways nor desire to make an extensive imitation of white culture. Their racial and cultural pride makes them cling to their own institutions and resent the assertion of white superiority in every sphere of life. This is evident in material culture as well as in the realm of political and social values. The Ngoni are well known for their skill in house-building, yet they prefer their own of poles and mud, and are slow to take to brick houses. Their houses, both in the villages and on the copper mines, were noticeably bare of 'store goods', and their expenditure on clothes and 'trash' is low in comparison with the wages earned. Their standards of hospitality, of courtesy, and of mutual assistance they believe to be much superior to the Europeans. They carried on their own system of courts by themselves until it was recognized by the Native Courts Ordinance a few years ago, and they speak with scorn of the chief who cannot decide his own cases and has to have recourse to the Boma. Several times in the villages, when describing their agricultural methods, or hygiene for young men, or moral training of children, they have said to me, 'Write that we knew this before the *Azungu* came'.

On one count they do concede superiority to the Europeans. 'Only in war the *Azungu* knew better', and that to the Ngoni was the acid test. In Mpezeni's and Gomani's countries, where they were conquered by force of arms, they knew they had to yield as they had made others yield in their day. Yet even here they find a cause for pride. 'No one ever conquered us until the *Azungu* came, and no one will conquer us again until they first conquer the *Azungu*.' This I have had said to me many times by men when speaking of their experiences as carriers and as *askari* in the East African campaign. They add as explanation, 'We went to the war of the Germans because the Boma said we should go. But we wanted also to see if the English would

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 5 Ngoni FR5 Maravi FR4

Ngoni prestige depended partly on the very effective justice meted out in the courts,[1] and also on the unquestioning allegiance of all subordinate authorities to the Paramount Chief. A Chewa Paramount Chief told me that he envied the power and prestige of the Ngoni Paramount, 'because all his chiefs obey him', and there is undoubtedly a widespread admiration among the less united local tribes for the centralized political organization of Ngoni, and the fact that they can hold a large area and many people together as an effective unit.

The Ngoni, therefore, in the course of the last thirty-five years have to a large extent made the adjustments necessary to their changed relations with the local peoples. They have accepted the new situation *de facto*, though they do not necessarily acquiesce in heart. They still think they are due a unique position among the tribes, and for this reason they dwell continually on the glories of *chawtandev*. Nor does the adoption of some measure of European ways reconcile them to a different attitude. Even educated Ngoni teachers and ministers have said to me with deep regret, 'We are ashamed because we are being ignored to-day by other tribes'.

Their attitude towards Europeans is also partly based on the European failure to accord them a unique position among the tribes, or at least to acknowledge their former unique position. This, to them, is a cause for feeling ashamed. They are ashamed too because the land, except in the Reserves, is no longer theirs, and they have to submit to taxation. 'To pay taxes, that is our war to-day', and something of the old martial spirit is evident in the young men who successfully evade the tax collectors, where the tax is collected directly by the Government, as in Mpezeni's country. In Gomani's country, on the other hand, where taxes are collected through the chiefs and headmen, though the men groan at having to find the money, they do not attempt to evade it, first because it would be useless, and secondly because they acknowledge the right of the chiefs to collect dues from them.

Any generalization about the Ngoni attitude to white people would be inaccurate without much detailed explanation, for which there is no space here. It is true though, I think, that at least in Mpezeni's country and possibly in the others, too, the Ngoni have not yet willingly made

[1] It is said that it is useless to bribe Ngoni chiefs and councillors.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

replaced by new ones, but the village as a whole may be regarded as stationary. The exhaustion of garden land in the vicinity of the village is the principal reason for moving, as with the passage of time a man has to go farther and farther from the village to find new land. Sooner or later it becomes more convenient to move the village to another locality where there is plenty of regenerated land on which gardens can be made. The death of the headman is sometimes followed by a move to a new site, while quarrels within a village may cause a portion of the inhabitants to go off and live on their own, usually after the matter has been referred to the chief. Since 1898 many villages have been moved off land alienated to Whites, or away from congested areas.

When the Administration is the instigator of the move, the new village site is a matter for discussion between District Officer, county chief, and village headman. In moves made on the initiative of the villagers, the various possible new sites are reconnoitred by the headman and other important people in the village and the site chosen is notified to the chief for his approval. The first people start to make their gardens in the vicinity of the site, and work is started on the new village. For this a recently abandoned garden site may be chosen, as it is easier to clear. The first structure to be built is usually a cattle byre. Making a byre is very hard work, and I was told that if it was left till later it would be difficult to get people to tackle the job. Rattray, writing of Gomani's Ngoni of central Nyasaland, relates how the headman's hut is built before the others, but this custom appears to be unknown in Fort Jameson District.[1]

Building is begun by the more industrious before the ruins end, and is completed after the harvest. The transition from the old site to the new one is gradual, as, unless the distance between the sites is too great, people will continue working the gardens in the old area until they are exhausted. New gardens are indeed opened up on the old site of the village, and it is quite common to see the ground dug up between the huts at the end of the ruins while there are people still living there.

[1] Barnes, *Folk-Lore Stories*, pp. 109–11. Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 103–5, gives an account of the building of a new village among Mombera's Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, in which the cattle byre was built first, but it must be remembered that this was a village built round a central byre, after the fashion of the South-Eastern Bantu, whereas the cattle byre in a Fort Jameson village is nowadays a smaller affair placed on the outskirts of the village.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

241 those who have not been working. Some people choose to do their
273 work in the garden on the day previous to the party, on the theory
476 that working and drinking do not go together. A few people offer
baskets of ground-nuts or other crops or meat in return for a day's
[485] labour, and monetary payments are also known.

Craftsmen

463 There are a number of specialized occupations which give rise to
inter-village trading. Pots are made by women. Some villages have no
573 potter and their inhabitants are dependent on pot-makers in neigh-
[462] bouring villages. Sometimes a woman may acquire a reputation for
pot-making sufficiently high to attract custom even from villages
where there are already pot-makers. Pots are sold in return for their
own volume of maize, or for money, or the customers may be required
to provide sufficient clay for twice the amount of pottery that they
wish to obtain.

285 Basketry is a man's craft, and at the end of the rainy season, when
[462] it is necessary to watch all day in the gardens for monkeys, men with
this skill spend their time at it. Baskets are sold for money or for maize,
and, as with pottery, there is a certain amount of inter-village sale.

759 Herbalists draw their clients from a wider area than do the pot- and
basket-makers, and their contacts with their patients are more intimate.
If a man falls sick, the remedies known in the family are tried first, but
if these are unsuccessful he may go to someone who is known for his
wide knowledge of medicines. Patients will travel up to 15 miles or
so to consult a herbalist, who may require them to live in his village
to receive treatment. Payment for medical treatment is sometimes
demanded part in advance, but other practitioners ask for a fee only
when a cure has been effected. Since the establishment of medical
[648] services by the Administration the way has been open for the medical
orderlies to operate in opposition to the herbalists, using misapprop-
riated European drugs.

III. THE FAMILY

Principles of Descent

611 The Ngoni are traditionally a patrilineal patrilocal people paying
[579] bride-wealth with cattle. This tradition is reflected in modern prac-
[585] tice only to a limited extent. Many of the men and women who were
[184] interviewed after Zwangendaba had crossed the Zambezi came from

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

matrilineal matrilocal tribes, and the values associated with these systems of organization were not entirely forgotten. With the decline of the central power of the chieftainship after the conquest, cultural diversity within the tribe increased, so that at the present time we have a wide range of variation in the kinds of family found between one village and the next, and even within the same village. In particular, the irreconcilable difference between the organization of unilineal kin-groups on patrilineal and matrilineal principles appears to have led to a condition in which, for most of the tribe, the only groups of relatives that emerge as corporate groups are stocks, people with a common ancestor from whom they are descended through sons or daughters or both. These stocks are not mutually exclusive, and a man may think of himself as belonging to one stock and at another time to another stock. Frequently alongside the true members of a stock there are other people who claim to belong to the same 'family' who are in fact related affinally to the members of the stock. The organizing factor in domestic affairs is not kinship by itself but common residence combined with genealogical connexion. A stock, with its affinal accretions, emerges as the core of a corporate group of kindred only when its members live near one another and meet each other frequently. The strongest groups are those people of a stock who are living alongside one another in the same part of a village.

The two modes of public affinal links in establishing attachment to a stock is noticeable. For example, a child will call a man who is his mother's divorced husband's wife's divorced husband by the term *father* (see Diagram 4 below). A man may bring into his village a wife from outside who may come with her children by a former husband. When grown up, these may also bring in wives accompanied by their children from other marriages. These children grow up to regard the village as their own and to think of themselves, in certain contexts, as belonging to the 'family' of the headman of the village. Informants in a village with a more complicated kinship structure will say 'We are all one family here'.

Kinship Terminology

The variation in the kinship systems of the different tribes from which the Ngoni received their members has led to some confusion in the use of kinship terms. Most of the terms now used are in the

[1] *Bonjo*, pl. *wabonjo*.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

marriages in which bride-wealth was paid were patrilocal, and those in which it was not paid, except for marriages with slave wives, were matrilocal. The matrilocal marriages were made only by recently incorporated Ngoni. The payment of bride-wealth is now significant only in relation to the residence and affiliation of the children of the marriage and does not affect the residence of the couple themselves. It frequently happens that a man goes and lives in the village of his wife when they are first married and that after a year or so he takes her back to his own village. This practice is fairly common among the matrilineal tribes of the region. A small payment[1] of five shillings or so may be made instead to enable a man to take his bride to his own village without first completing a period of matrilocal residence. Sometimes the legalization payment is considered sufficient to exempt from matrilocal residence. Indeed it is indicative of the wide range of variation in the different payments made and not made and in the significance attached to them that some informants were unable to state with certainty what payments had been made in their own marriages, although they knew the amount of money or animals that had been handed over.

This wide range of variation in behaviour in relation to marriage is one instance of the high measure of cultural heterogeneity of the Fort Jameson Ngoni. While present-day conditions are relevant to a study of Ngoni marriage, at the same time the effect of the combination of people with very different conceptions of marriage into a single state must not be overlooked. Among families that are powerful and claim to have migrated with Zwangendaba from the south, patrilocal marriage and the payment of bride-wealth are more frequent than they are among families of more recent incorporation. Cross-cousin marriage is noticeably more frequent in villages with people of Bisa descent than in the population as a whole. In Nyasaland, where there is a sharper cleavage into old Ngoni villages and conquered Cewa villages, the old Ngoni are characterized by a greater, and the Cewa by a lesser, incidence of patrilocal marriage.

Divorce

In the old days there was no way in which a woman could divorce her husband. A man could divorce his wife at any time by sending her back to her own people. The usual procedure nowadays, except in cases of adultery, is for the man to give his wife sixpence or a shilling

[1] *Mfukolelo.*